

Methuen & Co Ltd
11 New Peter Lane
London EC4A 3DF

Methuen Inc
733 Third Avenue
New York NY 10017

The Tremulous Private Body

Essays on subjection

FRANCIS BARKER

This fascinating study is neither a historical nor a theoretical/philosophical book, but a melding of the two approaches. Using as his sources works by Marvell, Rembrandt, Pepys and their contemporaries, Francis Barker maps the transformation of the spectacular corporeality of the stage and scaffold into a new situation in which a sexually embarrassed body is redefined, privatized and pushed away from discourse into a future half-life behind the text.

128 pages
Hardback 0 416 37840 4 £8.95
Paperback 0 416 37850 1 £4.95

The Soft Machine

Cybernetic fiction

DAVID PORUSH

This work shows how serious fiction of the post-war era by authors such as Barthelme, Pynchon and Vonnegut has responded to our new technological environment by synthesizing the concerns of artificial intelligence and computers with those of the human imagination. Porush explains his ideas with clarity, vivacity and imagination.

148 pages
Hardback 0 416 37860 9 £15.00
Paperback 0 416 37870 6 £6.95

Romanticism and Language

Edited by ARDEN REED

Ten original essays treat questions of language, a pivotal topic for Romantic writers and readers of Romantic literature. Varied in their styles of argument but consistently lucid and closely reasoned, these studies reinterpret literary and critical traditions by reading Romanticism itself as a kind of language.

320 pages Ex USA
Paperback 0 416 38980 5 £9.95

European Urbanization 1500-1800

JAN DE VRIES

Jan de Vries systematically analyses the population history of 370 European cities - every city with at least 10,000 inhabitants during the period 1500-1800 - in order to examine the nature and significance of urban development and the thesis that the cities of Europe gradually came to form a single urban system. Drawing on the data base, which is documented in an appendix at the end of the book, and using a wide range of economic, demographic and geographical models, he investigates the patterns of urban growth that were established.

432 pages Ex USA
Hardback 0 416 36290 7 £22.50

Reproductive Rituals

Perceptions of fertility in Britain from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century.

ANOUS MCLAREN

Professor McLaren discusses the various rules, charms, taboos and remedies employed to affect the processes of conception and gestation. *Reproductive Rituals* explains the social and cultural influences on fertility patterns which are central to our understanding of demographic change, and makes an important contribution to the history of the family. It is compulsive reading.

216 pages
Hardback 0 416 37450 6 £11.50
Paperback 0 416 37460 3 £5.95

Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939

Edited by PAUL PRISTON

These new essays, by a distinguished team of international scholars, explode the traditional view of the Spanish Civil War as a simple conflict between fascism and communism.

This collection of essays constitutes a magnificent monument to recent scholarship on the Second Republic and the Civil War. It is indispensable for a full understanding of the period.

320 pages
Hardback 0 416 34960 0 £14.95
Paperback 0 416 34970 8 £6.95

December 14 1984 Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

Contents

ART 1452, BIBLIOGRAPHY 1459, BIOGRAPHY 1435-4, 1440, COMPTON 1443-5, 1453-4, CHILDREN'S BOOKS 1456, ECONOMICS 1438, ENGLISH LITERATURE 1439, FICTION 1457, MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND LITERATURE 1449-51, PSYCHOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 1441, 1453-4, POETRY 1456, POLITICS 1437, SOCIAL STUDIES 1455

- STEFAN COLLINI
NIGEL CLIVE
PETER HEBBLETHWAITE
JEREMY HARDIE
T. W. HUTCHISON
VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM
J. K. L. WALKER
E. S. TURNER
MICHAEL HOFMANN
FRANCES DONALDSON
P. N. JOHNSON-LAIRD
DAVID PAPINEAU
STUART SUTHERLAND
JEFFREY HACKNEY
LOU BURNARD
IVAN FALLON
TOM SHIPPEY
JULIA BRIOOS
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS
GEORGE ZARNECKI
ARTHUR TERRY
ELIZABETH ARCHIBALD
M. T. CLANCHY
CAROLINE BINGHAM
B. K. DAVISON
STEPHEN BANN
CARTER RATCLIFFE
DANIEL C. DENNETT
ADAM HODGKIN
ANGELA CARTER
MICHAEL TANNER
JONATHAN BURNHAM
MAUREEN CAIN
SIMON RAE
BERNARD O'DONOHUE
PETER DIDS BURY
T. J. BINYON
JOHN MELMOTH
TOBY FITTON
BRIAN MCCABE
SARAH WINTLE
LINDA TAYLOR
JOHN MOLE
KATHERINE DUNCAN-JONES
DAVID MCKITTERICK

- D. P. Crook: *Benjamin Kidd - Portrait of a Social Darwinist* 1435
Chapman Pincher: *Too Secret Too Long - The great betrayal of Britain's crucial secrets and cover-up* 1437
Peter Jennings: *An End to Terrorism* 1437
Paul Ferris: *Geniuses of Fortune - The world's innermost and investment bankers* 1438
Charles H. Hession: *John Maynard Keynes - A personal biography of the man who revolutionized capitalism and the way we live* 1438
Geoffrey Grigson: *Recollections - Mainly of artists and writers, Maumig's Tower and other poems* 1439
Elsie Borish: *Literary Lodgings* 1439
Jonathan Guinness with Catherine Guinness: *The House of Miford* 1440
Errata (poem) 1440
Michael Bloch: *Operation Willi* 1440
Owen J. Flanagan: *The Science of the Mind* 1441-2
John Searle: *Minds, Brains and Science* 1442
Sherry Turkle: *The Second Self - Computers and the human spirit* 1443
John Bear: *Computer Whup* 1443
Peter Large: *The Micro Revolution Revisited* 1443
Michael Stadlin: *The Silicon Idol - The micro revolution and its social implications* 1444
Robert Sobel: *IBM - Colossus in transition* 1444
Following the story (article) 1445
All about toys (article) 1445
American notes 1446
Author, Author 1446
Letters on Freud and the Seduction Theory, Cambodian History, Oxford Authors, etc 1447
Commentary
The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art, 966-1066 (British Museum) David M. Wilson: *Anglo-Saxon Art: From the seventh century to Norman Conquest* 1448
Joan Martorell and Mari Joan de Galba: *Tirant lo Blanc* 1448
Kevin L. Morris: *The Image of the Middle Ages in Romantic and Victorian Literature* 1450
Fifty years on, 1450
Susan Reynolds: *Kingsdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* 1451
Ronald Williams: *The Lords of the Isles - The Clan Donald and early Kingdom of the Scots* 1451
David J. Calvert King: *Castellum Angli conum - Antiquity and bibliography of the castles in England, Wales and the Islands* 1451
Hubert Damisch: *Faire la jeune caduque - ou les dangers de la peinture* 1452
Suz Gablik: *Has Modernism Failed?* 1452
Computer models and the mind - a view from the East Pole (article) 1453-4
J. David Bolter: *Thirring's Man - Western culture in the computer age* 1454
Aone Campbell: *The Girls in the Gang - A report from New York City* 1455
Pickles: *Queen* 1455
Liza Critchfield Dalby: *Galatin* 1455
James McClure: *Cop World - Pulling the streets of San Diego* 1456
William Logan: *Difficulty* 1456
Andrew Harvey: *No Diamonds, No Ills, No Honey* 1456
Paul Hyland: *The Suburban Forest* 1456
Peter Forbes: *Abolishing the Dark* 1456
John Mole: *In and Out of the Apple* 1456
Patrick Haro: *Aeroplane in Childhood* 1456
The Mountain Hare (poem) 1456
Len Delton: *Mexico Set* 1457
B. Traven: *The Rebellion of the Hungry* 1457
Fred Uhlman: *Beulah the Lightning and the Moon* 1457
John Burrows: *Joanese's People - A Gorbals story* 1457
David Thomson: *Roman and other stories* 1457
Joan Aiken: *Fog Hounds, Wind Cms, Sea Mice* 1457
Partap Sharma: *The Little Master of the Elephant and other stories* 1458
James Riordan: *The Woman in the Moon and other tales of love* 1458
Margaret Mabey: *The Birthday Burglar and A Very Wicked Henchman* 1458
Aahabel Farjeon: *The Lucky Ones* 1458
Cataloguing incunables (article) 1459
Index of books reviewed 1459
Among this week's contributors 1460
Information, Please 1460

Commentary
The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art, 966-1066 (British Museum) David M. Wilson: *Anglo-Saxon Art: From the seventh century to Norman Conquest* 1448

Joan Martorell and Mari Joan de Galba: *Tirant lo Blanc* 1448
Kevin L. Morris: *The Image of the Middle Ages in Romantic and Victorian Literature* 1450
Fifty years on, 1450
Susan Reynolds: *Kingsdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* 1451

Ronald Williams: *The Lords of the Isles - The Clan Donald and early Kingdom of the Scots* 1451
David J. Calvert King: *Castellum Angli conum - Antiquity and bibliography of the castles in England, Wales and the Islands* 1451
Hubert Damisch: *Faire la jeune caduque - ou les dangers de la peinture* 1452

Suz Gablik: *Has Modernism Failed?* 1452
Computer models and the mind - a view from the East Pole (article) 1453-4
J. David Bolter: *Thirring's Man - Western culture in the computer age* 1454

Aone Campbell: *The Girls in the Gang - A report from New York City* 1455
Pickles: *Queen* 1455
Liza Critchfield Dalby: *Galatin* 1455

James McClure: *Cop World - Pulling the streets of San Diego* 1456
William Logan: *Difficulty* 1456
Andrew Harvey: *No Diamonds, No Ills, No Honey* 1456
Paul Hyland: *The Suburban Forest* 1456

Peter Forbes: *Abolishing the Dark* 1456
John Mole: *In and Out of the Apple* 1456
Patrick Haro: *Aeroplane in Childhood* 1456
The Mountain Hare (poem) 1456

Len Delton: *Mexico Set* 1457
B. Traven: *The Rebellion of the Hungry* 1457
Fred Uhlman: *Beulah the Lightning and the Moon* 1457
John Burrows: *Joanese's People - A Gorbals story* 1457

David Thomson: *Roman and other stories* 1457
Joan Aiken: *Fog Hounds, Wind Cms, Sea Mice* 1457
Partap Sharma: *The Little Master of the Elephant and other stories* 1458

James Riordan: *The Woman in the Moon and other tales of love* 1458
Margaret Mabey: *The Birthday Burglar and A Very Wicked Henchman* 1458
Aahabel Farjeon: *The Lucky Ones* 1458

Cataloguing incunables (article) 1459
Index of books reviewed 1459
Among this week's contributors 1460
Information, Please 1460

Cover picture: One of six all-earns, "Fables Portfolio", 1976, by Jessi Dore, sold for £4,950 at Sotheby's on December 5.

From clerk into guru

Stefan Collini

D. P. CROOK
Benjamin Kidd: Portrait of a Social Darwinist
406pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.
0 521 25804 9

In 1893 Benjamin Kidd was a thirty-five-year-old lower-division clerk to the Inland Revenue Board. Like thousands of other Mr Pooters created by the late nineteenth-century growth of clerical employment, he commuted to central London from a rented suburban villa where he maintained his family on the respectable though constraining salary of £231 pa. Like who knows how many of his black-coated brethren, he nursed large literary and scientific ambitions. He was, typically, an avid naturalist, a scientific autodidact, and just a little bit of a crank. Like those thousands of lesser Darwinians who were inspired by the great man's modest methods, he compiled lovingly detailed botanical and zoological descriptions and engaged in homely experiments. Before he was married he kept colonies of bees, ants and wasps in his rooms. His first published literary efforts were popular nature essays, with such coy titles as "Concerning the Cuckoo" or "The Frog and his Relations" ("As a social animal the frog is a failure. In his morose and solitary disposition he bears about with him the visible signs of his inferiority.")

It was as exercises in applied Darwinism that these essays laid claim to the title of science. This was one of the favourite intellectual pastimes of the day: the facts could always be established by sufficiently diligent observation, and the ultimate explanation for their existence was given in advance by the theory of natural selection. The ingenuity lay in displaying in plausible detail how a particular and at first sight irrelevant characteristic might have been developed in the struggle for survival, an enquiry classically carried on in the back bedrooms of late-Victorian suburban semis, just as the game which it had dislodged - of explaining, in the style of natural theology, how these details exhibited the resourceful benevolence of the Creator - had classically been carried on in the studies of country rectories. Kidd, however, was not content with humbly helping to siff one or two pieces in the enormous jigsaw of nature; he always sought after the "secret key" to the cosmos, the principle or theory which would unlock the deeper coherence and meaning of both the social and the natural world. He was a variant on the contemporary Jekyll and Hyde theme: Pooter by day, Casaubon by night.

In this way he threaded together his own eclectic synthesis of several of the intellectual fashions of the age. He was, for example, an enthusiastic early follower of the German biologist August Weismann, whose theory of the successful transmission of the "germ plasm" as the regulatory goal of natural selection was intended to banish all vestiges of the Lamarckian doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Then, like Kropotkin and others in the 1890s, Kidd denied that this evolutionary mechanism favoured the selfish individual member of the species, at least where the higher species were concerned; evidence of "altruism" and co-operation among animals was much in vogue, and Kidd cleverly adapted these findings to argue that, despite the progressive role of competition in general, the survival value of group solidarity increased as one ascended the evolutionary scale. The fatally dangerous defect of pre-Darwinian social theory, he maintained, was its tendency to exalt individual rationality or selfishness - it was part of the potential strength, though ultimately a fundamental weakness, of his theory that he equated the two - at the expense of long-term group interests. But, fortunately for human progress, especially in its modern European embodiment, such individualism had generally been overborne by a much stronger force which reinforced solidarity and provided a non-rational selection for the evolutionarily necessary altruism, namely religion. The moral imperative to give priority to the welfare of others turned out to have impeccable scientific credentials. All this, and much more besides, was spelled out with an impressively wide range of not very closely investigated historical examples, in a heavy manuscript which Kidd

finally completed in the summer of 1893.

He then took the shrewd step of showing this product of his leisure hours to his chief at the Inland Revenue, Alfred Milner, soon to achieve fame as an imperial proconsul. With Milner's help it was submitted to two publishers: Longman rejected it, on the basis of unfavourable readers' reports, as unlikely to prove a paying proposition; Macmillan accepted it, cautiously agreeing to print 1,500 copies and to give the author half of any profits that might accrue after all costs had been covered. The book, simply titled *Social Evolution*, was published early in 1894: it was an immediate best-seller, and Kidd's life was transformed. In the first eighteen months he netted the enormous sum of £2,400, ten times his annual salary. In four years the book sold a remarkable 200,000 copies (though the then common problem with pirated editions in the

caught the attention of an audience primed to feel concerned about the way "irrationalist" ideas had had Europe to Armageddon, and his reputation enjoyed a short Indian summer.

Thereafter, his name fell into oblivion for a couple of generations. In sociology, the Intellectual Enterprise that gave him star billing in his lifetime, he has sunk without trace: the historian of the subject who chose to set him alongside his exact contemporary Emile Durkheim, whether as a student of the social functions of religion or as a propagandist for socialism, would be criticized for perverse antiquarianism or sheer whimsicality. It is true that historians of Social Darwinism have never been able altogether to ignore his formidable contemporary reputation, and more recently historians of the politics, and particularly of the imperialist thinking, of the period have accorded him a respectful, puzzled mention.



Josef Sudek's gelatin silver print "Untitled", 1940, reproduced from Photography as Fine Art (224pp, with 183 plates, including 26 in full colour, Thames and Hudson, £9.95, 0 500 27300 6).

United States meant that the author was denied his full royalties.

Kidd soon gave up his civil service job, living the last twenty years of his life (he died in 1916) on the royalties from his books, the dividends on the very lucrative investments he made with them, and the income from the journalism and other freelance commissions which his early success thereafter sent his way. He became something of a public figure, whose views on the social and intellectual developments of the day were solicited by editors alert to the value of an opinionated scientific sage, and whose authority was cited on both sides of the Atlantic on subjects as diverse as the proper form of Imperial trusteeship or the nature of sociology. In fact - and this is again typical of that class of quirky pseudo-scientific social prophets who capture public attention with one inspired theoretical hybrid - Kidd was never able to repeat the success of *Social Evolution*, and the period leading up to the First World War saw a steady decline in his reputation. Ironically, he became increasingly alarmed at the possible political consequences of the Social Darwinism he was popularly identified with, diagnosing it in a late-middle-aged mood of cultural nostalgia as part of a wider revolt against the moral standards of nineteenth-century civilization. When his last book, *The Science of Power*, was posthumously published in 1918, it briefly

But for the most part his life has remained as obscure as much of his prose.

This situation will now be amply remedied by D. P. Crook's very fully documented intellectual biography. Based on enterprising digging in the archives as well as a thorough survey of Kidd's journalism and occasional writings, it enlarges our understanding of his ideas without attempting to reflate his reputation or exaggerate his significance. Dr Crook seems admirably at ease in the political and intellectual milieu of turn-of-the-century Britain, adroitly placing Kidd's work in its very varied contexts with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of enlightenment. He judiciously corrects misinterpretations and over-simplifications by other historians (including myself) who unwisely sought to summarize Kidd's eclectic and shifting theories in a few neat phrases. The book is especially good, as only intellectual biography can be, at showing both the persistence of certain intellectual habits and views that were the deep expression of temperament and cultural formation, and the ways in which Kidd's arguments and aspirations shifted with shifting circumstances, including those of his own career and age.

Though Crook's account is restrained and fair-minded, resisting all temptations to mockery or idolatry, the portrait of Kidd that emerges remains rather unattractive. The

autodidact with a message for mankind can be a tiresome companion. Unshakeably convinced that he had something original and important to say, Kidd resented advice, neglect, disagreement and criticism in equal measure, betraying at times signs of a mild persecution complex. It is remarkable how writers who sell hundreds of thousands of copies of their books complain of indifference and worse should a busy editor express the slightest reservation about an ill-considered proposal for an article; Kidd was the sort of author who makes editors shrink from opening their mail. More generally, he had the self-made man's touchiness about his independence combined with the outsider's yearning for acceptance. He took umbrage like other men took snuff; he kept an extensive stable of very high horses.

Like so many critics of hedonism, he seems to have had an underdeveloped capacity for pleasure. "Cleanly habits and simple comfort" were his staid ideal, and, as this suggests, his asceticism yielded him some of the satisfactions of puritanism. He deplored the slightest hint of sexual scandal, and primly disapproved of the advocacy of freer relations between men and women. He seems to have been hopfully married in his way, though his way wouldn't be everybody's: Crook impressively reports that Kidd's wife "typed the manuscripts for his later works, for which he made her a gift of a large silver salver inscribed with affectionate thanks". At one point, Crook allows himself the rare speculation that Kidd "was, in Freudian terms, a classic 'anal-retentive' type", and goes on: "One might conjecture that Kidd's grandiloquent, imaginative and ill regulated speculations represented a reaction against, or a release from, the constrictions of the anal-retentive character." There may be something in this - it is the teasing and modding feature of such characterology that there is always something in it - but it seems no less plausible, and perhaps more illuminating, to construe Kidd's schematic subsumption of all of human history under a few basic laws rather as a symptom of his excessive need for control than a release from it. The reductive theorist is in flight from the sheer disorderly abundance and variety of reality. Notoriously, part of the wider appeal of such mono-causal theories of history lies in the reassurance they offer that there is a pattern in the carpet, that the forces at work are few and simple, that "complexity" is a dodge invented by pedants to hide their fear of commitment, and these responses all bespeak the presence of *l'esprit de système*. Nor is this incompatible with the ostensibly contrary satisfaction of surrendering one's will to the impersonally cosmic. Kidd clearly obtained a certain *frisson* from dwelling on the universality and irresistibility of the great biological forces underlying human history, as Crook rightly observes, but the tone suggests less that he joyously found in this an excuse for letting it all hang out and more that he was gratified to find that nature, too, was intolerant of uncertainty.

Kidd's theories receive an intelligent and not unsympathetic exposition in this book, but the result is to suggest that they do not, frankly, invite any very extended critical attention, and I do not imagine that philosophers and social theorists will feel compelled to consult the pages of *Social Evolution* or any of Kidd's other works. Crook's study does, however, help us to address several historical questions of considerable interest, even though they are not explicitly raised in this form. The first is about the structure of intellectual life in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain, and the availability of various roles within it; the second concerns what can be learned from Kidd's eminence about the understanding of sociology during this period; and the third deals with the nature and role, especially the political role, of that cluster of ideas conventionally labelled "Social Darwinism".

In both social and intellectual terms, Kidd was, initially, an outsider, outside those overlapping worlds of the well born and the well connected, the public-school and university-educated, the political, professional and academic classes. Earlier in the century, such a figure would probably have been provincial rather than metropolitan, a Radical rather than a Whig, a Dissenter rather than an Anglican. But these were no longer the structures

The money-movers

Jeremy Hardie

PAUL FERRIS
Gentlemen of Fortune: The world's merchant
and investment bankers
260pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.
0297 783807

With admirable flair and colourful detail, Paul Ferris describes the extraordinary institutions which have come to dominate banking and financial markets in the past ten years or so – not only in the United States, where the species shows its fullest development, but increasingly in London, encouraged by the Government, the Bank of England, and the trust-busting activities of the Office of Fair Trading. The scale of these activities, and of the resources needed to keep them going, would beggar the imagination of even the most far-seeing banker ten or fifteen years ago. The trading room of a big New York institution like Salomon Brothers has hundreds of expensive (typically young) traders, their rows of desks stretching out far into the distance – each with his, or her, VDU, massed telephones, fashionable clothes and smart chatter, waited on by boot-blacks and sandwich-vendors, all involved in a raucous hubbub of shrieked bid and counterbid. International markets run right round the clock, with Tokyo handing its book to London who hands it to New York in turn. The standard nine-to-five working day is spent entirely at the dealing desk, with no break for lunch and little variation in the monotony of instantaneous reaction to the deal of the second. Getting business depends a great deal on personal contact. This cannot be done during the day, when the conversation is limited to messages so brief and cryptic that they cannot be persuasive. After work, so-called entertainment takes over. What entertainment means depends on what your customer wants. I met a man in New York recently who had spent the previous evening drinking and dining, and then

went on to a disco with a client who liked that sort of thing. He got to bed, an hour or so out of the city, at 3 a.m. At 6 a.m., he was up again to play squash with a customer who preferred fitness to night-life. At 9 a.m., he was back in the office.

Ferris's reporting of the character and history of the main people and institutions is accurate, and excellently drawn; above all, he catches the enthusiasm, energy and glamour of the frenetic financial markets. It is not his business or inclination to speculate what all this activity is really for. It is a commonplace that modern economies are moving fast out of manufacturing into services, and that this move is a natural and desirable part of the process of development. However, for the United States and the United Kingdom in particular, the key feature of the change turns out to be a rapid increase in the provision of financial services – meaning everything from high-street insurance broking to the massive international operations described by Ferris. Is it really right that we should devote so many talented people, and pay them such huge amounts (in New York, \$150,000 is a typical income for a dealer in a decent year), solely to ensure that we have a Rolls-Royce system of financial markets? One justification which is often used is to say that provided this is the result of freely operating markets, it must reflect the choice of ultimate customers, and their needs. In this case, certainly, the markets look free enough, and they are comparatively easy to enter, compared with many modern technology-based industries. On the face of it they are highly competitive. So if we see hundreds upon hundreds of expensively dressed young men spending their days shouting exchange rates at each other, they can only be there because somebody freely chooses that they should do so, in order to satisfy some need.

Nevertheless, doubts remain. What is it that the ultimate customer, or the mediating business, needs that requires such a huge and rapid development of financial services? Every

undergraduate economic text-book tells you that lending, and hence borrowing, and hence investment is made a great deal easier if the saver can sell his stock or share on to somebody else quite quickly if he needs cash instead. Not many people would invest in industry if they had to tie up their money in perpetuity. So far so good. But does this perfectly natural desire for liquidity require such an army of intermediaries to make it good? And why is it that the demand has increased so spectacularly over the last twenty or thirty years? After all, Victorian industry prospered with much less agile stock-markets.

A possible alternative explanation is that financial markets have become a venue for gambling. Very many investors believe that the way they can make money is by guessing more quickly than their competitors which way the market is going. You then sell now to buy back more cheaply later – or vice versa. To do this successfully, there has to be a very efficient

market which will let you buy and sell financial assets in large quantities, at once. Otherwise, you cannot move quickly enough to take the opportunity. So investors are willing to pay large amounts of money for a system which provides them with such instant facilities. The activity is like gambling, not because it involves greed, or taking a risk, but because the game is zero-sum – that is, although each player thinks he can make money off the rest, in the aggregate all the players taken as a group cannot gain, since one man's profit is another's loss.

Even if this diagnosis is correct, it does not diminish the traditional free market/consumer sovereignty argument, whereby what free markets produce is usually, subject to qualifications, self-justifying. But it certainly casts a different light on the activities of these "gentlemen of fortune" if, instead of showing the way to the sunny uplands of the post-industrial society, they are simply servicing an increasing desire to gamble.

Through androgynous eyes

T. W. Hutchison

CHARLES H. HESSON
John Maynard Keynes: A personal biography
of the man who revolutionized capitalism
and the way we live
400pp. Collier Macmillan. £14.95.
025513109

For some time a new biography of Keynes has been needed to supersede, or at least supplement, Roy Harrod's *Life*, which, a third of a century ago, was written too soon, in too fulsome a style, and under excessive restraints, partly self-imposed. For one thing, the economic history of the past decade or two has brought considerable changes in opinion (not as noticeable in British academia as elsewhere) regarding the economic theories and policies to the elaboration of which Keynes's life was primarily devoted. Second, it is now easier to discuss publicly aspects of Keynes's private life which Harrod felt he had to suppress; and on this subject there have now become available shelves-full of Bloomsbury diaries and letters, biographies and autobiographies, etc. etc., together with mountains of unpublished documentation. Anyhow, two new biographies have recently appeared. In such rapid succession that they make no reference to one another: the first, by Robert Skidelsky (see *TLS*, November 4, 1983), and the second by Charles H. Hession, bearing enthusiastic endorsements from Professors Kenneth Boulding and J. K. Galbraith.

Confidence in Mr Hession's work is mildly jolted, at the outset, by four or five misspellings of place-names on p. 2. For English readers a further surprise may be occasioned by the remark, à propos of the literary education imparted to her son Lytton by Lady Strachey, that "at an early age she introduced him to French letters". Reassurance may not be fostered by subsequent references to "Alfred" Pigou, Professor Edgeworth "of Cambridge", and to the "Etonian" C. R. Fay. These might be regarded as rather trivial blemishes. (What does it matter what Pigou's Christian name was? One can't imagine many people addressing him by it.) However, further misgivings, on behalf of academic readers, must be expressed regarding the *Source Notes*: page references are mostly not given; so that it is pretty difficult, and sometimes impossible, for an inquisitive reader to follow up quotations and citations.

What must be decisive, however, is the treatment of the big questions, and the balance of the book as a whole. In one sense, regarding the fantastic range of interests, activities and accomplishments packed into the sixty-two to three years of Keynes's life, this biography achieves an admirable balance and comprehensiveness. Regarding other kinds of balance, assessment is inevitably difficult and controversial. This "personal" biography makes much of Keynes's homosexuality, or androgyny, seeking to relate them closely, or significantly, to his main work and achievements. Such authorities as Freud and Fromm, Adler and Erikson, are called in to assist. The

cult of homosexuality in Victorian public schools is invoked, and the personalities of the parents are indicated. The relationship between androgyny and artistic creativity is briefly discussed. Though the upshot is not uninteresting, it all seems extremely tenuous, speculative – and perhaps more than slightly irrelevant. Admittedly, historians of economic thought, in their interpretations, or exegeses, have been inclined to give insufficient weight to biographical factors, for example with regard to Ricardo and his achievements. Certainly, also, Harrod's suppressions were seriously distorting. Here, however, it may seem that the "personal" aspect has been somewhat overworked – provided it is accepted that the centrepiece of Keynes's life and work lay in his achievements as an economic theorist and statesman.

One "personal" point which could have been followed up might be derived from Schumpeter's hint about Keynes's "childish vision". This may have lurped his discernment of, or interest in, the long-run dilemma looming up, since the turn of the century or before, for Britain's economy and its relative place in the world. This problem deeply worried Alfred Marshall in his later years, but then largely disappeared from Cambridge preoccupations. Admittedly, throughout the second half of his life, after 1914, Keynes's attention was inevitably engrossed by shorter-term dangers and crises. But the longer-run economic problem for Britain seems to have caused him extraordinarily little concern (though he showed, at times, that he had a rather surprising "Kipling" side).

Presumably the most important balance in a major "Life" of Keynes must turn on the explicit and implicit, regarding his economic theories and policy ideas, and of his work in the Treasury during the two world wars and their aftermaths. What is open to criticism, in this respect, is that Hession's account is almost uniformly approving throughout, and that comparatively little recognition is granted to the seriousness of the criticisms suggested, not only by subsequent history, but by economists back to the 1920s and 30s. Keynesians (though not themselves outstandingly inclined to such confessionals) have been rather fond of citing Pigou's public recognition, in his old age, of some of his earlier and most sweeping criticisms of Keynes's *General Theory*. But there were other criticisms and qualifications, put forward by Pigou and others, and certainly unattracted, which deserve to be given more weight and attention. In fact, Hession's stance and treatment may here be considered to approximate rather too closely to that of Harrod thirty-three years ago. The concluding "Afterword" on "The Transformation of Keynes's Vision since 1945" is too brief and ambiguous to restore the balance. Moreover, while suggesting that Keynes would "want to distance himself from some of his 'Keynesian' successors, Mr Hession is not sufficiently clear as to just which, and how many, of them would be rejected. In these transformed times they might, perhaps, number many more than he, or other Keynesians, seem prepared to envisage.

Knowing and loving

Valentine Cunningham

GEOFFREY GRIGSON
*Recollections: Mainly of artists and writers
195pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press.
£12.50.*
0701127920
*Montaigne's Tower and other poems
72pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.95.*
0436188066

Geoffrey Grigson's *Recollections* is about the nuances of knowing. When this "Cornish-East Anglian parson's son" first came to London in his middle twenties he only knew, he says, about authors. He lacked the self-confidence, Oxford notwithstanding, even to imagine being *in the know*. But he hadn't have worried. The "Viennese Irish Jewish" girl who lived across the landing at the King's Road digs just happened to have Antonia White as an older chum. And, bigger coup by far, Grigson's first wife turned out not only to have hailed from St Louis, Missouri, but to have lived in the very same street as the Eliots. "So you are Tom Galt's daughter", the great man greeted the offspring of his rakish erstwhile schoolmate during tea at Alice Herbert's flat – she the keen patroness of bright literary hopefuls. It was not, to be sure, the most promising of starts for Grigson himself, but it was undoubtedly a start.

Before very long he was right there in the cultural deep end and swimming keenly, even butting the other swimmers and shooting them up to the shallows. That is to say, he was domiciled in Hampstead, friendly with his neighbour Herbert Read, and with the artists who came to Read's *soirées* – Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore. He'd also rapidly become the books editor of the awful night-wing *Morning Post* and was keeping up his own magazine *New Verse*, home of the Auden-esque and all its familiars, on the sale of *Morning Post* review copies ferried down in weekly taxi-loads to T. J. Gaston's oasis for needy hacks in Chancery Lane. Already, then, by the time he was thirty, Grigson was a man with subterranean opinions, and patronage to dispense.

He kept Dylan Thomas in funds by giving him thrallars to review for the *Post*. Even the fierce looter Wyndham Lewis, always short of cash, was soon seeking out Grigson, priming the pump with an ABC tea near Leicester Square. Memorably, a man dropped dead at the next table. It was an apt touch, since the poor man had been slipping within earshot at two of twentieth-century literature's harshest tongues. No poet is recorded as having dropped dead while reading *New Verse*, though many might well have. In every way, the once diffident Cornish lad (at least, that's his story) had become a body to reckon with.

The taste for the authority that knowledge brings is very evident in *Recollections*. Infectiously, Grigson lets loose his love of inside stories, new news, unstable gossip. A whole section here, entitled "Items", passes on such tasty morsels as his never having heard T. S. Eliot laugh; pleasure crackles off the page as Grigson retails the report of a military VIP admitting he'd kept his bottom pressed to the wall of a BBC lift which also had the raucous Guy Burgess in it, or tells how Grigson's oldish antagonist Roy Campbell – who once raised a drunken knoberry to Grigson in Regent Street and then crowed in a telegram to Edith Sitwell, another of Grigson's pet hates, that Grigson had been publicly beaten – he manfully leapt into the bulging at Arles, only to be knocked over by the bull which then licked the prone old baaster's face.

Inside knowledge on the scale of Grigson's *Recollections* is undoubtedly the kind of power that attracts some literary people. Sharing the accumulated knowledge of the like-minded multiples that peculiar hold a power over others, which is one guess, one reason Grigson went in for and still endorses the groupishness of the 1930s. "Commands" is his telling word for the sectarian divisions of the 1930s London literary world. And with Grigson in a major command, dislikes were sported like open razors. The *New Verse* mob had little liking, for instance, for the boys and girls of *Scrutiny*; it was a "body-builder for pigs". Grigson still admires his old tag. The Grigson

Read lot once sat down and plotted the downfall of the Hominites (ineffectually, as it happens). Grigson's ancient vexation with Ruthven Todd – he recalls him as deceitful, odd, squalid, a trespasser on hospitality, a stealer of his books – still clearly rankles. Some rancour is, in the 1930s way, only to be expected.

For his part now, Grigson seeks to defend Auden's famous, and often sneered-at, end-of-decade declaration that we must love one another or die. With seeming conviction, Grigson relates it to the biblical statement, "Who loveth not his brother abideth in death". And he loves some, at least, of his literary neighbours staunchly. His celebration of artists, in particular his friends Henry Moore and Ben Nicholson, and of friendship itself, couldn't be more powerful or more moving. Friends, as Grigson recalls them, help each other in thankless tasks like sifting the bogs in your rural cottage garden, they lend or give you valuable paintings and sculptures, they calm down the excited, and give the neurotic all the attention they need. Friendship on this account is, above all, the affection that seeks no instant reward, expects no quick worldly mileage in return; and Grigson makes a memorable point here of advertising the merits of writers he's known whom it has been, and still is, unfashionable to admire: the likes of Clere Parsons, Joy Scovell, Bernard Spencer, Geoffrey Taylor. He loudly scorns Cyril ("Pig") Connolly and Evelyn Waugh for cultivating the safe bets, the right people, and he allows suspicions of doing that to hang over Stephen Spender. Occasionally this volume begins to read as if the old Grigsonian waspishness might be yielding under the pressure of maturer considerations, Auden-esque aphorizing and/or the biblical influences of the parental vicarage. But not for long. Bracingly, the old eager sectarian hostilities – against Bloomsbury's painters, the Sitwells, all Wyndham Lewis despisers, public-school heads, cultural grandees like Kenneth Clark, John Keats and Cecil Day Lewis (put down still further by having his notorious line about seeing a Communist and feeling small misquoted – Grigson misrecalls "a Red" as being in question) – all get jammed again, more or less, into their old unmellowed pillories. What's more, just as of old, only the closest of the professed chums remain immune. Perhaps, after all, he thinks, Herbert Read never did "look a picture in the face". And Spender – for all his "holiness" – might have been better off thinking of the "truly great" a bit less than continually. And we can't help reflecting that Ruthven Todd, the much maligned, was once a friend of Grigson's. And Dylan Thomas – now unforgettably done for by Grigson as Dirty Dylan, the Ditch, the Snotty Troll – was once, we recall, pretty hotly tipped by *New Verse*. Was Boeamy Dobrée taken in by Dylan, Grigson wonders? But why was Grigson, we wonder? Unapologetically, he makes up for the old lapses with heaped venom.

Grigson's zest for cursing others is equalled only by his wish to remain uncursed himself (he worries over his old-time friend John Betjeman's fabled cursing of him up on White Horse Hill). These recollections are full of the extended paradoxical play between Grigson's perversely dual wish both to have friends and to make enemies. But then, Grigson's work is rather stacked with paradox. He's the devoted provincial who loved lordling it over the metropolitan who keeps celebrating BBC chaps and such who had the English gentleman's trick of polite rudeness; the sneerer who finds sneers always deplorable; the dedicated Modernist whose perennial touchstones are Eliot and Picasso, Braque and Henry Moore but who thinks and writes with an eye for birds and wild flowers, fish, gardens and, as we see, just as if Georgian tastes hadn't once been dumped so vociferously into the Modernist vomitory.

In Grigson's book, God wots still that garden is a lovesome thing. Grigson likes that familiar line, and the line of thought it opens, and the poem it starts off, and the kind of anthologies it used to appear in – he even compiles anthologies himself – despite what Graves and Riding thought about all those things. Noticing the small things of the natural world, collecting the poems that do such noticing, keeping faith in fact with Hardy and Edward Thomas, are for Grigson necessary elements in

being alive, of respecting the world we live in, of being humane and as "religious" as he declares all poets ought to be. A responsive curiosity, an eclectic liking for odds and ends, is what he professes repeated admiration for. This, he tells us, is what attracts him in John Piper, J. R. Ackerley and Ben Nicholson, and in his old favourite minority rendering, the magazine *Antiquity*. Curio-gathering is, of course, as Grigson has no need to underline, the great virtue of his beloved Auden's poetry. Great poets, great human beings, Grigson keeps suggesting, have this capacity for surprising affections and admirations – even, Grigson tolerantly allows, on occasion the curious taste of an Eliot or Auden for Christian orthodoxies.

Grigson's own openness to experience is never quite as open as he declares his greatest friends' to be. And he would never, of course, go back to Christianity, never go that far. His latest volume of verse, *Montaigne's Tower and other poems*, shows his old scepticism about theological comforts reasserting itself the more as he feels his physical end drawing nigh. He doesn't much care, naturally, for the idea of dying (the *Recollections* are much enraged and saddened by what he believes were untimely and needless deaths – those of his own first wife and North Spencer, both dying with TB on the eve of the development of preventive antibiotics; Clere Parsons dying in an Oxford hospital that was tragically unaware of his need for insulin). But as he approaches his eightieth birthday, Grigson is evidently attending to what he calls the "half tender, half ironic / Whisper from the dead". And unsolam about it as Grigson always is, death still, inevitably, closes all; it's the final "horizon which / Is edged by nothing".

So what are mainly left to the poet, especially when a Yeatsian nugging sets in, when "you ask your sad / Self what you have done? What / You have made?", are acts of remembering. Finely, he recalls a picnic, "together", sitting on yellow bales among blue hills under rose clouds, and then going over "that photo alone" that was stuck, "after". "On one page in your album", Hardy would have recognized the activity and the feelings. Memory is offered as a powerful bulwark against mortality. Thales of course, in "Wild Threshing: Olive Trees", last much longer than personal memories do. And the rich man in "Death of a

Rieh Scholrsly Bachelor" can hang about a long time in the rough purchased likeness carved on the library of the medieval foundation he has endowed. But just remembering and recording memories are what Grigson cheats death with.

The poem "B.N.", for instance, remembers Ben Nicholson – the master of line and driver of fast cars – in his process of recalling French riverscapes in his low-relief artworks; and it has to be read alongside the superb *Recollections* piece which also recalls that same process of recalling. Likewise, the title-poem "Montaigne's Tower" celebrates yet one more location that's proved good for "recalling. I would soy" – "For being benign and wise, for loving / In words", and caps Grigson's perpetual activity, not least in the *Recollections*, of seeking to animate a sacramental sense of place, particularly places associated with great writers and artists. Grigson likes natural things, but he likes natural things which have cultural associations even more: "Isn't there a spiritualization", he asks, in Ronsard's "essays of the country immediately around the Château de Montaigne in the Dordogne and the tower in which Montaigne sat end thought and wrote, in the orchards, the meadows, the valley immediately below the terrace of the *château*, and the way the sun strikes the *château* walls and the sides of his valley?" This is why Grigson visits artistic homes and graves, belletristic though this might seem to more up-to-date readers. He even cultivates plants that carry literary memories – Viper's Bugloss for Crabbe, irises from Balzac's *château* at Secbéc, and so on. Nature plain, but also literary nature; association copy. It's the most resonant Grigson paradox this, the mix of literary naturalist and nature-watching poet-critic, the intercession announced in the edginess of the poem "Art Gallery Window". There is, it's allowed, good stuff to be contemplated inside and outside the gallery; but most memorable, and most to Grigson's purposes,

there is also to be practised an art of looking steadily outward through "Windows of galleries of art."

Surprised by the joys of such layered looking, Grigson even forgets for a while to carp or to score over somebody else. And that's his best kind of knowing, because it's also his best kind of loving.

Overnight with the famous

J. K. L. Walker

ELAINE BORISH
Literary Lodgings
249pp. Constable. £9.95.
009 4651809

Literary Lodgings has been conceived from the simple and not unpromising idea that literary-minded travellers will prefer to put up at hotels with literary associations. So Elaine Borish has gathered some three dozen such establishments up and down the country (more down than up, it transpires; little seems to have happened north of Lichfield). Some were formerly the homes of writers, others hotels or inns patronized by writers; most acknowledge the literary connection if only in named bedrooms or public accommodation.

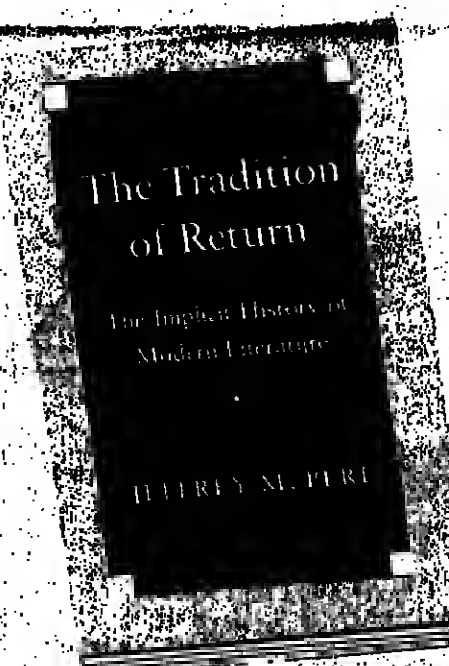
It quickly becomes apparent that once the association has been pointed out there isn't usually a great deal more to be said; the visitor and his imagination are left to get on with it. Many of the entries will under this kind of pointlessness: Diarrell nursing his gout at Bournemouth, Henry James passing through Oxford, Jane Austen staying overnight at Dartford, Kipling honeymooning in Dover Street, Lewis Carroll (perhaps) as a guest of the Liddells at Llandudno. Slightly more à propos is the information that Thackeray wrote the first numbers of *Vanity Fair* in Brighton and Kenneth Grahame, from Falmouth, the letters to his son which were the genesis of *The Wind in the Willows*. Chagford, on Dartmoor, provided Evelyn Waugh with a retreat over the years where he worked on novels from *Black Mischief* to *Brideshead*, getting through 3,000 words of the latter in three hours on February 14, 1944. Edith Wharton, in contrast, managed only a fifty-two-line poem

beginning "Wonderful was the long secret night you gave me, my Lover" after a night spent with William Morton Fullerton in the Charing Cross Hotel in 1909, but no doubt the working conditions were not comparable.

At Alfoxden House, Somerset, Wordsworth and Coleridge collaborated on the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1797-8. That Willem's library is now the Oak Room Bar might not have pleased Dorothy much; nor, one fancies, would Bloomsbury be overjoyed to learn that Talland House, the Stephens' holiday house at St Ives, is today "comprised of self-contained, comfortably furnished and well-equipped flats, designed to offer guests all the amenities that enhance the perfect holiday". It can be nothing but good news though, that, since the days of Byron and Augusta Leigh, Swynford Paddocks now "dispels dark and gloomy accusations of dreeded incest in its bright, cheerful and elegant atmosphere".

Dark and gloomy accusations of dreaded brochure-writers' prose are still around, on the other hand. Most establishments attract several paragraphs of fulsome prose which is out of place in a work with claims to objectivity. Devotees of Michelín will note that a third of Ms Borish's entries are unrepresented in the 1984 *Guide*. These, perhaps, will reassure visitors reluctant to have their sensibilities dulled by comfort.

Because the connection between writer and venue can in most cases be stated in no more than a few lines, Ms Borish resorts to padding out her material with potted biography: the book, in fact, largely consists of this. It may be seen as a further imaginative aid to the literary-minded guest as he sips his nightcap in his hotel room, but much prior softening up in the bar and the television lounge would be needed to arrive at this view.



The Tradition of Return
The Implicit History of Modern Literature
Jeffrey M. Perl

Focusing on Rousseau, Burckhardt and Pater, Nietzsche and Freud, Tolstoy, James, Lawrence, Joyce, Yeats, Eliot, and Pound, Jeffrey M. Perl reassesses modernism in order to enrich our understanding of the direction literary culture has taken since the Renaissance. \$42.50 (U.S.)

Order from your local bookseller or from
Princeton University Press
15A Epsom Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2JT

In search of six characters

E. S. Turner

JONATHAN GUINNESS with CATHERINE GUINNESS
The House of Mitford
640pp. Hutchinson. £12.95.
009 1555604

It is not unknown for a writer of memoirs to invent quirky aunts and uncles to supplement those furnished by nature. Such a temptation can never have beset Jonathan Guinness, son of Diana Mosley (Lady Mosley) by her first marriage, nephew of the five other "Mitford Girls" (the blurb credits John Betjeman with "coining" this phrase, which surely took little coining).

The justification offered for "yet another" book about this kenspeckle sisterhood is that what has appeared about them so far is fictional, political or partisan. Nancy's novels presented a hilarious caricature; Diana's *A Life of Contrasts* was a defence of Sir Oswald's attitudes, enabling reviewers to call her "unrepentant"; Jessica's *Hons and Rebels* was "a left-wing Pilgrim's Progress"; and David Pryce-Jones's life of Unity (who attempted suicide in Munich in 1939) was "too hostile to permit much insight".

So the task of the author, in harness with his daughter Catherine, has been to compare, con-

trast and correct the various texts, with some recourse to family letters and interviews. Aunt Jessica, ex-Communist and talented muck-raker, whom Mr Guinness has not met since he was seven, declined to see him; he seems half-relieved, having heard of the interlocutory prowess she developed against unscrupulous embalmers and the like.

This is an enormously long book, but far from dull, despite the obvious constraints under which it was written. If it demolishes old stories, at least it offers new ones. By no means all the points scored are debating ones. In his defensive role the author's fall-back position is that what now seems unjustifiable was at least understandable, in the context of the times; for many, of course, fascism will never be understandable. There are occasional swipes at the "talking classes" and Claud Cockburn's "waffle" in *The Week*, along with observations like "compassion has always been best verbalized by the left", but the general tone is level and dispassionate. Mr Pryce-Jones may object that he is twice accused of "retailing" ill-substantiated tales and retort that his critic surely does his share of "retailing" too.

Discussing the Mitford addiction to power worship, the author says that when his mother threw in her lot with Sir Oswald Mosley "it was the passion of Juliet and at the same time the conversion of St Paul; emotion and conviction were inextricable." In Unity the inextricable elements were hero-worship and conviction.

Nancy fell for the Colonel who embodied the dreams of de Gaulle and Jessica sought a fusion of love and idealism on the far left. Why this politico-Romantic questing by four daughters out of six? That remains the unexplained mystery. (The other two daughters, Pamela and Deborah, are referred to, affectionately one hopes, as "the animal lovers".)

According to this account, when Mosley attacked the Jews "his grounds were not racial but political." We are assured also that the Mosleys were interned, not as potential traitors, but as opponents of the war. Nancy, however, informed the authorities that Diana was a "dangerous" woman and so did the author's grandfather, Lord Moyne. When the Mosleys were freed Jessica protested publicly.

Those antipathetic to Mitfords (politics apart) will cite the family voice, which caused Nancy to be dropped by BBC radio when she broadcast on air-raid precautions, the passion for nicknames (Evelyn Waugh wanted this custom revived), the obsession with teasing, the private language, the unrelenting jokes ("pigs' thinkers" for breakfast) and the reputation for empty-headed frivolity. This book insists that the girls were much better educated than the talking classes supposed. Though taught at home, they worked conscientiously for the examinations of PNEU (the Parents' National Education Union).

Nor, it seems, was Lord Redesdale (Uncle Matthew, of *The Pursuit of Love*) such a raging philistine. It is hard to picture him employed on *The Lady*, even non-editorially. He still comes over as an unworldly character; one of his money-losing projects was to market *papier-mâché* covers for ugly radio sets. Domestically he was unpredictable. Jessica "used to shake her father's elbow as he was drinking his tea, to give him palsy practice for when he was old". All good clean fun; like Lady Mosley's reported comment, after being visited in hospital by Lord Longford in 1981: "Of course, he thinks I'm Myra Hindley".

From time to time the boy Jonathan crops up in the narrative. He is the nanny-scorched seven-year-old who, in 1938, interrupts the conversation of the singer, Olga Lynn, in a German train with "My Mummy thinks Hitler's right", drawing the reply "Then I think I know who your Mummy is." At school his chums demand autographs of Unity. He tucks into his mother's meals in her Holloway "suite", his appetite unblunted by emotion: "It was all part of the war: mother in prison, father away in the Army, no sweets, food on the rations, gasmask." His mother by then had a fur coat bought from a libel award against the *Sunday Pictorial*, while Aunt Deborah (later Duchess of Devonshire) owed hers to a brush with the *Daily Express*.

The two grandfathers who fill the first 200 pages are Algernon Bertram Mitford, first Lord Redesdale, and Thomas Gibson Bowles, "Bertie" Mitford, a classical scholar, went as a diplomat to Japan, where he was detailed to watch a samurai commit *hara-kiri* as a prelude to one-stroke decapitation, an incident he described in his popular *Tales of Old Japan*. As Secretary to the Board of Works he restored Hampton Court and the Tower. In later life he admired, with reservations, the racial writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, not then rated an intellectual boulder. His wife came from "that great family of teases", the Stanleys.

Bowles founded the irreverent *Vanity Fair* and later *The Lady*, which was at one time edited by a former governess by whom he had three illegitimate children. His greatest public tease was an action against the Crown on the sort of issue Sir Alan Herbert would have approved. How much Mitford mischief was inherited from these two we are left to decide for ourselves.

The grandfathers' lives could well have been rendered down a little more. No space has been wasted on trifles like notes or bibliography, but there is a good index.

Getting at the Duke

Frances Donaldson

MICHAEL BLOCH
Operation Willi
324pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.
0297 784625

On page 239 of *Operation Willi* Michael Bloch refers to me as the Duke of Windsor's "somewhat hostile biographer", and goes on to pick a quarrel on what seem slender grounds. I had formed my opinion of his book before I read this passage (which is not indexed), but I mention it because it might be thought to have excited prejudice. Mr Bloch has never made any secret of his mission to defend the Duke against the critical observations of other writers, and in an earlier book he adopted the technique of merely leaving out of discussion anything inconvenient to this intention. Even so, when one reached what one assumed would be the kernel of a book entitled *The Duke of Windsor's War* — the German plot to secure the person or sympathies of the Duke as he passed through Spain and Portugal — one was astonished by the boldness of the explanation that no detailed account of this would be given as it was to be the subject of a future publication. However, Bloch has been as good as his word and here, after more than four years intensive research, is a book devoted to this episode and one which examines all the facts.

Operation Willi can be read on two levels — the author puts it forward as a piece of historical detective work and also as a "cracking good adventure story". But it is not entirely satisfactory as either. As a good story it is rather hard going because of the intricacies of the plot, the end of which is always clearly in sight. Bloch, who partly relies on memories of the events of forty years ago, does what he can to guide us through by giving us pen-portraits of the Germans, Spaniards and Portuguese involved and explaining their attitudes and motives, although he is sometimes a trifle over-persuasive in relation to his second task of presenting the results of objective research.

He bases the book on the popular view that the Duke was involved in the German plot to overthrow the British government in 1940.

The German plot was ludicrous in conception and clumsy in execution. Yet the attempt was ludicrous only if one believes that there were no circumstances in which the Duke, like Pétain, might have been persuaded that his duty to his country was to negotiate with the Germans, and one cannot say too strongly that this was a matter not of patriotism but of judgment. The Duke consistently over-valued his own opinions, capacity and following. He never made any bones about his belief that it was a colossal error for the British to fight the Germans, and he is reported as saying that "the most important thing now to be done was to end the war before thousands more were killed and maimed, to save the faces of a few publicans". David Eccles described him as "pretty fifth column" and Churchill, who sent Walter Monckton out to get him away, warned him that the Governor of the Bahamas should not express a view "about the war, or about the Germans, or about Hitlerism, which is different from that adopted by the British nation and Parliament". In Hitler's place one might well have thought it worth while to approach the Duke.

Bloch defends the Duke on the grounds that he dealt with Portuguese and Spaniards and had no reason to believe that the Germans were involved — an explanation difficult to accept in view of the undisputed proximity of some of those who took part and the nature of several of the confidential reports. Who but the Germans could in any circumstances have restored the Duke to the British throne? On the matter of the telegram sent by the Duke from Bermuda in which he appears to ask for orders from his late host, Ricardo Espinosa Salto, who had certainly revealed that he acted as go-between for the Nazis, Bloch offers a relatively innocent explanation which is not possible but is less than convincing and subject to the same objections as the one he rejects.

All in all, although in *Operation Willi* the intricacies of the conspiracy have been thoroughly and cleverly revealed, one remains much in the dark about the Duke's thoughts or possible reactions in the event of a German victory as one was before reading the book.

The ghost-hunters

P. N. Johnson-Laird

OWEN J. FLANAGAN
The Science of the Mind
336pp. MIT Press. £23.75 (paperback).
£11.90.
0262 060906

Consider the ways of the bacterium *Escherichia coli*, which can live in the gut and upset the stomach, seems like an intelligent organism, since it sensibly migrates towards food and away from poisons. You might therefore suppose that it sets its course as the result of a rational decision based on an internal representation of its environment. In fact, biologists have discovered that *E. coli* has no need for any mental life whatsoever: no representation, no memory, no choice. Evolution has solved its navigational problems without the need for an internal map. The bacterium's flagellae rotate — nature does not entirely abhor the wheel — and when they turn in an anti-clockwise direction they propel it forward, whereas when they turn in a clockwise direction they fly apart and cause it to tumble over and over. It has special receptor proteins that can bind a variety of substances (nutrient and toxic) according to the shape of their molecules; and their receptors, in effect, shifts the gear controlling the flagellae's direction of rotation. If food is detected, they rotate anti-clockwise so that the organism moves in a straight line. But, if no further stimuli are detected the direction of rotation begins to alternate: *E. coli* moves at random, thereby ensuring that there is a reasonable chance that it stumbles on to the path of the nutrient stimuli again. It is thus able to home in on a target emitting particles of food much like a plane flying, somewhat erratically, down a radar beam.

The bacterium raises no psychological problems because it has no psychology. It is an automaton. And, since Descartes, theorists have argued that there is no problem in understanding how machines work. Lord Kelvin even turned the argument around: "I never satisfy myself until I can make a mechanical model of a thing. If I can make a mechanical model I can understand it. As long as I cannot make a mechanical model all the way through I cannot understand it." Since all explanations have to take something for granted, here is certainly one criterion for what might count as an explanation. Because we can now make robots that behave in an analogous way to bacteria, we believe that we understand the mainsprings of their behaviour. However, other organisms — human beings at least — do have a mental life. How is it to be explained?

Psychology was invented to answer the question, but it no longer searches alone. During the past decade, there has grown up a confederation of disciplines — linguistics, philosophy of mind, cognitive anthropology, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and psychology itself — whose practitioners have realized that they are converging on the same set of problems and have independently invoking the same explanatory ideas. The so-called cognitive sciences have sometimes seemed like six subjects in search of an interdisciplinary synthesis; if that synthesis does not yet exist, it is certainly necessary to invent it. Owen Flanagan is a philosopher of mind and in *The Science of the Mind* he has taken a long perspective on the subject. His book is not a progress report, but a series of essays examining the foundations of the science(s) of the mind. He scrutinizes the ideas of six individual thinkers: René Descartes, William James, Sigmund Freud, B. F. Skinner, Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, and he assesses some current work in cognitive science and neurobiology. Flanagan's concern, very much in the spirit of the new confederation, is to show how philosophy and psychology can mutually inform one another and resolve some of the puzzles of mental life.

Descartes, the first modern philosopher of mind, is indeed an appropriate starting-point, because if Cartesian dualism is correct then it is impossible for there to be a science of the mind. We can understand animals (and bacteria) because they are automata. We can understand involuntary reflexes because they are machine-like. But the mind is not a machine; it is free, and the way in which it governs

voluntary behaviour depends on an utterly mysterious link between the immaterial and the material. This argument is so appealing and has permeated our culture for so long that most people are either confessed or closet Cartesian. Even if you have never encountered Descartes's arguments, you probably believe that you have free will, that your conscious decisions are the prime-mover in your life and behaviour, and that they defy scientific explanation. Yet, as Flanagan demonstrates, the arguments for dualism are not decisive. Descartes's "cogito" argument shows that you cannot doubt that you have a mind, but can doubt — with a sufficient access of philosophical scepticism — that you have a body. Dualism depends on the further dubious assumption that the essential nature of reality is reflected in what it is impossible for you to doubt. In the same sceptical vein, you might doubt that the universe is finite but unbounded, but obviously your state of mind has no bearing whatsoever on the truth of this proposition.

Dualism is so potent that the history of psychology on a grand scale is no more than a series of reactions to it. Wilhelm Wundt, who founded the experimental discipline, accepted that it was impossible to study higher mental processes. William James, as Flanagan points out, rejected this consequence of the "cogito" but implicitly adopted its methodology. For James, consciousness was all, and introspection was the window on the mind. The conscious mind, he asserted, serves an evolutionary function. It makes possible teleological behaviour, because it allows human beings to hold beliefs about objects, to formulate goals with respect to them, and to act intentionally to achieve those goals. On the alleged distinction between conscious and unconscious mental states, James delivered a characteristic pronouncement, which I shall quote since Flanagan does not: "It is the sovereign means for believing what one likes in psychology, and of turning what might become a science into a tumbling-ground for whimsies."

Here there is a splendid irony. One might suppose that James was prophesying some of the baroque extravagances of the heirs of Freud. In fact, he was writing, not about the Unconscious as the repository of aggressive and sexual drives, but about the Unconscious as a source of inferences underlying our perception of the world. As Flanagan observes, Freud's theory is a direct repudiation of the Cartesian claim that there is nothing easier to know than the contents of your own mind. But the concept of unconscious inference, which Flanagan neglects, also places limits on the extent to which introspection can reveal the workings of your mind. Moreover, in obedience to the Freudian imperative — where I was, let Ego be — you may apparently recover the contents of your Unconscious by free-association on a psychoanalyst's couch, whereas no introspective procedure will allow you direct access, say, to the process that uses the disparity between the two retinal images to see the world in depth. The notion of an unconscious mental mechanism has turned out to be very far from a whimsy. One of the triumphs of cognitive science is the work of the late David Marr and his colleagues in pulling together the methods of psychology, neurophysiology, and artificial intelligence, in order to spell out how stereopsis works.

The most radical reaction to Cartesianism is to reject the "cogito" and to deny the reality of mental life. The early Behaviourists took this view of the matter, and it remains the credo — or whatever its neuronal equivalent is — of latterday materialists. They approach the behaviour of human beings with the aim of reducing it to the automatisms of a bacterium. The proper study of sensory organs, nerves, and muscles, they believe, will reveal that there is nothing left to explain since the ghost will have been exorcised from the machine. This sort of argument gives dualism a good name.

Flanagan considers Skinner's subtler version of Behaviourism. Skinner, who I suspect to be a closet Cartesian, argues that mental life may exist but it plays no essential role in behaviour; hence there is no need to refer to it. Part of his appeal, I think, is his considerable success with operant conditioning. There is no doubt that some human behaviours can sometimes be modified and shaped by rewards — prefer-

ably presented not all of the time, but intermittently. Operant conditioning rules? No, not quite, because there are other human propensities — the capacity to communicate, for example — that develop even in the absence of rewards. But Skinner's case also rests on a seductive methodological argument, the "theoretician's dilemma". On the one hand, if an environmental stimulus is lawfully related to a hypothetical mental event that, in turn, is lawfully related to behaviour, then the theoretician may ignore the mental event and formulate a law directly relating stimulus to behaviour. On the other hand, if mental events are not lawfully related to stimuli or to behaviour, then the theoretician should not refer to them. Mental events are in short either redundant or noise in the system.

There are good arguments against the theoretician's dilemma, and Flanagan considers some of them, but perhaps fails to make enough of its major defect. Not all behaviour is predictably related to environmental stimuli; human beings can exercise imagination and create novel ideas and make novel responses. One possible mechanism for creativity, which Skinner advocates, mimics the evolution of species. It depends on an initial quasi-random process that produces an over-abundance of possibilities and on the subsequent use of a set of constraints, such as a schedule of rewards, to filter out anything that is not viable. What both he and Flanagan overlook are the disadvantages of such a neo-Darwinian method: it is slow, wasteful, and may fail to yield any viable product. The proverbial team of chimpanzees typing at random will produce great quantities of rubbish. They will be at work for a long time before any one of them types a sentence; and even if the universe becomes one vast simian typing-pool, it will still come to an end before an acceptable novel is likely to emerge.

An alternative explanation of creativity has been proposed by Piaget. He postulates a principle of "equilibration" — a drive that promotes the development of ever more powerful mental structures. But Flanagan readily demonstrates that this notion is vague and dangerously circular; that is the classic instance of a theorist who takes far too much for granted. Lawrence Kohlberg, who applied Piagetian notions to children's emergent sense of morality, avoided this problem altogether since according to Flanagan he provided no theory of the process at all. Lord Kelvin would never have been able to construct a mechanical model of such notions as equilibration. But then one can hardly use his criterion here because simple machines are not innovative except perhaps when, like Ting-uey's sculptures, they go wrong and fall apart. Indeed, their lack of imagination was amongst Descartes's reasons for supposing that there could be no science of the mind.

One of the foundations of cognitive science is a logical invention of the 1930s: the theory of computability, and this theory provides a much richer notion of mechanism than was dreamt of by Descartes or Kelvin. It shows how any well-understood process can be constructed from an elementary set of building-blocks that does not take too much for granted. The cognitive sci-

entist's task is accordingly to devise a computational account of creativity that is very much more efficient than the neo-Darwinian method. In fact, our mental abilities are likely to make available to us just such a method, a "neo-Lamarckian" mechanism, which in essence reverses the order of the two evolutionary processes. A set of constraints is used initially to derive a relatively small number of possibilities, and then whenever there is more than one alternative a quasi-random choice is made from amongst them. For example, when a musician improvises a new melody to fit a sequence of chords, the available time does not allow phrases to be tried out by trial and error. On the contrary, the musician must rely on a largely unconscious set of procedures for generating an appropriate melodic "contour" that fits the harmonic progression. A theory of these procedures can be developed by analysing the musician's improvisations, and such theories can be, and have been implemented in computer programs. They yield a small number of alternatives at any point in the melody, and a choice amongst them can be made rapidly.

The most significant determiner of this sort of creation is not an environmental stimulus but the internalized generative procedures. Even if one has complete access to them, however, it is impossible to predict what will be created on any particular occasion. A series of choices from a small repertoire of possibilities soon yields a combinatorial explosion, and the musician (or program) is about as likely to repeat the same piece by chance as are the chimpanzees to retype their efforts. Nevertheless, a theory of the process would be refuted if the musician improvised a melody that could not be "parsed" by the theory's generative principles. Like evolution itself, this process of creation can be explained but not predicted.

Cartesians may object that improvisation within a particular genre is not true creation, hence it is not so surprising that machines are capable of it. Orthodox conduct within an existing framework is only a matter of following a set of tacit principles. But what about the creation of a new genre? One might program a computer to paint pictures in the style of classical Cubism, but could a program be devised that would invent Cubism from a study of the paintings of Cézanne, and in general invent any genre from a perusal of its precursors? In fact, the successful development of a new genre, or a novel scientific theory, is not merely the outcome of a psychological process. It depends on complex social and physical interactions of a sort that may well be impossible to represent accurately in any model simpler than those events themselves. If so, it will not be possible to develop a testable scientific explanation of the phenomenon.

The hypothesis that mental life can be explained in terms of a computational process was originally framed by Kenneth Craik before the invention of programmable digital computers. It constitutes the most recent reaction to Cartesian dualism: body and mind are bound together as computer and program. The doctrine faces two serious difficulties: the problem

Errant

In your absence, it's up to me to be the man of the house, and listen to the late news with my mother. And afterwards, *Urlaubs Reise Rufe*, private calamities available to a few people on top of the global ones. Missing persons, a sudden illness — or any dramatic good news? We both think the same thing: *Gert Hofmann, travelling in Yugoslavia in a silver Audi 100.*

The appointment you kept for twelve years (even though it was only provisional and intended for someone younger anyway) ended this summer, and we have your disestablished household and a late rent demand forwarded here to prove it.

With every instalment of property, my mother seemed to be nearer to reclaiming you: books, furniture, your favoured avant-garde lamps — feminine abstracts!

Being away was a drug. Your family safely parked across the border — your departure advanced from week to week — you set off, newly bathed, appealing, dressed in white, quitting the corners of the mountain passes in your messianic car! Twelve years with a double life as part-time bachelor! The end of the prelude didn't mean the end of the place. With no more reason to be there, you manufacture a quarrel and leave on a careful impulse. I've had only three days with you. They didn't add up to much. Once more, you proved not to be the dearest old man I double-take at the station. But the beaverish wrinkles of feeding or disdain or both have deepened beside your nose and mouth. Under your eyes, clarified by balloon spectacles, I see bleak and bleak.

Once, you offered me your clippings file — the human touch! What next: a translator's essays, a printed interview? This time, there's a new string to the bow of your activities. Dressed in grey from top to toe, with a grey beard, grey face, grey felt country hat, you disappear into the garden with a shovel like a one-man death squad. The caramel-coloured plain-and-purl slugs have to learn that speed kills, relatively speaking. It's your one concession to gardening. For a long time, you thought of having a work-hut put up in the garden — the satellite existence of the writer made flesh. You could turn it round to be in the sun. It's a standard dream that maybe you still have, though imperceptibly it's become absurd, like having a pleasant evening at home.

MICHAEL HOFMANN

The AI Business: Commercial Uses of Artificial Intelligence
Edited by PATRICK H. WINSTON & KAREN A. PRENDERGAST
Is Artificial Intelligence a new frontier with great possibilities and unlimited investment potential? Or is it simply hype?
£14.25 Hardback 280pp illus. 0-262-23117-4

The Computer Comes of Age: The People, the Hardware, and the Software
RENE MOREAU
The first serious attempt to take the history of the computer beyond the early 1950s and into the 1980s. *Times Higher Education Supplement*
£20.00 Hardback 228pp 0-262-15194-3

Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs
HAROLD ABELSON & GERALD JAY SUSSMAN
This book aims to give the reader command of the main techniques used to control the complexity of large software systems.
£26.50 Hardback 400pp illus. 0-262-01077-1

Robotics Research: The First International Symposium
Edited by MICHAEL BRADY & RICHARD PAUL
The fifty-three contributions collected in this book present leading current research from all over the world in this fast-moving field of artificial intelligence.
£27.00 Hardback 1,000pp illus. 0-262-02207-9

Robotics Research: Second International Symposium
Edited by HIDEO HANAFUSA & HIROCHIKA INOUE
May 1984 £247.25 Hardback 600pp 0-262-08181-2

Getting Computers to Talk Like You and Me: Discourse, Context, Focus, and Semantics
RACHEL REICHMAN
September £20.90 Hardback 144pp 0-262-18118-5

Robot Hands and the Mechanics of Manipulation
MATTHEW T. MASON & J. KENNETH SALSBURY, JR.
June £51.50 Hardback 279pp 0-262-13205-2

THE MIT PRESS

of meaning, and the problem of consciousness. Flanagan considers the pet chim of John Searle, this year's Reith lecturer, that programs cannot exhibit mentality because they lack a semantics. Existing computers have a most impoverished mental life because they interact with the world in highly restricted ways. They manipulate symbols in a purely formal manner without any grasp of what the symbols denote. One area of current work in cognitive science is the development of programs that effectively take an input from a television camera and from it construct a three-dimensional representation of the objects in

the world giving rise to the image. As the computer's representations of the world are enriched, so too it should be possible to enhance its grasp of meaning. There remains the barrier of consciousness. Cognitive scientists are divided on the issue of whether or not it is a computational process. Flanagan writes, echoing many such claims: "It is hard to see how the right qualitative character could emerge from the wrong kind of organic stuff, let alone from a plastic and metal electrical device." This line of argument falls into the same trap as the "cogito" - the assumption that the nature of reality is illuminated by

what one can doubt. But, so too does the contrary argument. The issue is only likely to be resolved by attempts to formulate, and to implement, the sort of parallel computational architecture that is called for by the division between conscious and unconscious mental processes. What is clear is that no existing computer begins to approximate this design.

The Science of the Mind touches upon many other challenges to the cognitive sciences - rationality, free will, and the extent to which genes determine mental phenomena. Its author deftly takes apart bad arguments, and puts the pieces together again to solve a series of

intriguing puzzles. What the book lacks, however, is an overall thesis or organizing framework. This weakness shows up in the team it fields to represent the development of the cognitive sciences: Freud is in, but Helmholtz (the architect of the unconscious inference) is out. Skinner is in (for bypassing the mind), but Craik (who refused to take the de- tour) is not. E. O. Wilson is in but David Marr does not even reach the index. Owen Flanagan thinks of science as having a narrative structure; he tells us excellent stories about his team. His book would have been even better if it had also had a story of its own to tell.

The significance of squiggles

David Papineau

JOHN SEARLE
Mind, Brain and Science
102pp. BBC Publications. £8.95 (paperback
£5.25).
0 563 20286 6

John Searle's Reith Lectures have been widely received as a timely exposure of those woolly-minded computer-lovers who believe that computers can think, and indeed that the human mind is just a biological computer. In print Professor Searle's lectures retain the same punchy and engaging style as they had on the air. They also give us the opportunity to decide whether there is anything behind Searle's antipathy to computers apart from simple prejudice.

Searle starts off well enough. In the first lecture he raises various questions about the mind's place in the material world. Firstly, there is the problem of causal interaction - how can the mind influence the brain, and vice versa? Then there are the twin problems of consciousness and subjectivity - how is it that mental states involve subjective feelings of conscious awareness? And then there is the problem of intentionality - how is it that mental states can be about things, can reach out and refer to things other than themselves?

Searle deals with the first problem, the problem of causal interaction, by endorsing the now standard modern version of materialism. Mental events stand to brain events as, say, the solidity of a table stands to its molecular structure. One doesn't, in the latter case, think of the solidity as something puzzlingly detached from the molecular structure. No more should one think of pains, or beliefs, or emotions, as inhabiting some realm cut off from the neurophysiology of the brain. In neither case are there two substances, two different kinds of stuff. There are simply two different scales of description, two perspectives with different levels of focus.

Searle's remarks on consciousness and subjectivity are less satisfactory, however. In effect, he simply says that feelings manifestly do exist, and so we'd better believe it. True enough. But how does this sit with Searle's materialism? There is a long and respectable tradition, stemming from Descartes, which takes the existence of consciousness to show there must be more to mind than matter. Searle obviously believes that this tradition is mistaken, and that there is no reason why certain purely mental states shouldn't be consciously experienced by the beings that have them. But then he surely owes us at least some account of where the Cartesian dogma went wrong, and of how we should resist their intuitions.

The problem of intentionality is the focus of the second lecture. My desire to visit Naples relates me to a place where I have never been. My belief that Bob Hawke won the Australian election reaches out and refers to a man on the other side of the world. How can one thing be about another in this way? This is where Searle's antipathy to computers comes in. For he thinks that however the trick is done, it is obvious that we can do it and computers can't.

His rationale for discriminating between humans and computers in this way is the "Chinese room argument". For those who haven't heard it, the Chinese room argument goes like this. A man is sitting in a room containing lots of bits of paper with squiggles on. Further bits of squiggles are passed into the room. The man has a book of rules specifying, for

every combination of squiggles that comes in, which set of squiggles he should pass back out. Unbeknownst to the man, the incoming squiggles are all good Chinese questions. And the rule book is designed to ensure that the man always passes out the right Chinese answer. But obviously the man doesn't thereby understand Chinese. However, such formal manipulation of symbols is all computers ever do. So computers must lack understanding too.

This is not a good argument, but it does get under one's skin. One can see why Searle has dined out on it for so long. For it is extremely difficult to identify the exact point where he leads us astray. And so each philosopher who disagrees with Searle has his or her own theory of what is wrong with the argument. My own response to it is that understanding Chinese isn't a reasonable first task to set a computer. Understanding Chinese is a highly sophisticated activity. Or rather, since the special complexities of Chinese are not the point, understanding any language is a highly sophisticated activity. By no means all intentional states involve a grasp of some public language. A dog can remember where a bone is buried; a chimpanzee can believe there are a lot of bananas up a tree. Maybe dogs and chimps aren't fully self-conscious. But it is not feelings of conscious awareness that are presently at issue, just the possibility of having thoughts about things. So dogs and chimps seem able to have intentional states, even though they understand no language. Similarly it seems wrong to say that all human beliefs involve language. Even when I believe that there are bananas up that tree, there is no direct sense in which my belief depends on my linguistic abilities.

One can think of understanding a language as a matter of having beliefs about words. To understand a Chinese sentence is to have the belief that a certain string of symbols represents a certain state of affairs. But this theory only emphasizes the point that understanding a language is a quite special and sophisticated intellectual ability. For not all beliefs are beliefs about the representational powers of words.

Why then does Searle take it that the appropriate test case is whether computers can understand Chinese? No doubt his thought is that, whatever goes on in dogs and chimps and humans, computer operations consist entirely of the formal manipulation of symbols. So if a computer can do any thinking at all, it surely ought to be able to understand such symbols.

There is a sense in which Searle is right to think that digital computers spend all their time formally manipulating symbols. But only someone who quite misunderstands the suggested comparison between computers and minds will infer that they must therefore understand those formal symbols. Suppose I wanted to build an artificial chimp. One of the first things I would do would be to give it some structured internal state which was triggered whenever its sense organs were presented with bananas; and which led it to return to the bananas when it needed nutrition. This structured state would consist of an array of internal switches, or, at a different level of description, of a set of numbers in certain registers in the robot-chimp's memory bank. To this extent one could think of the structured internal state as a string of formal symbols. And having such an internal state is just the kind of thing that would incline computer enthusiasts to say that the robot-chimp was capable of believing that there were bananas up that tree. But they wouldn't dream of saying that therefore the chimp understood the formal symbols that

structured array of switches inside its head. The chimp wouldn't have any beliefs about those symbols, let alone beliefs which told it what those symbols represented.

I might even try to design a chimp that understood Chinese. To do this I might give it further internal states, in virtue of which it could be said to associate certain Chinese symbols with such non-linguistic things as bananas. So, for instance, I might give it some further internal state, again consisting of some structured array of switches, which ensured that whenever it saw a certain set of squiggles it would get into the original believing-there's-a-banana-up-that-tree state. Given all this, one might argue that the chimp understood those Chinese symbols to refer to bananas. But it would just be a confusion to conflate this with the claim that the chimp understood the structured array of switches which gave it this understanding of Chinese.

Of course there is much more to understanding human languages than simple word-banana associations. But the point is that whatever kind of understanding anybody, or any computer, has of anything, it is not supposed to be an understanding of some structured array inside its head. Rather, the thinker is supposed to understand other things, because he has such a structured array of formal symbols inside his head. Nobody (except perhaps the programmer) needs to understand the internal formal symbols themselves. And so arguments about what would or would not be understood by a little man manipulating such symbols inside the head, or inside a Chinese room, are of no significance.

Having come this far, it should be admitted that we are left with a real philosophical problem. If having beliefs is just a matter of having sentence-like structures inside one's head, then we still need to explain where the "aboutness" of mental states comes from. One can't just rest, as many cognitive scientists seem to, with the terminology of "sentences", or "symbols", or "representations". For, without any internal homunculi to breathe significance into them, it is not at all clear how brute internal structures can stand for anything. And to this extent Searle is justified in urging that "syntax is not semantics". Where he is not justified is in his faith that an explanation of semantics will be possible for humans but not for computers. After all, there is no obvious reason why biological "wetware" should by any better at imbuing internal structures with semantic significance than silicon "hardware".

A natural suggestion at this point is that the "aboutness" of internal structures is something to do with their causal relations to external objects. Thus the array of switches inside the robot-chimp's head could be argued to be about bananas precisely because it was caused by the presence of bananas; and because it caused the chimp to go back to the bananas when it was hungry. As it happens, this suggestion is rather less straightforward than it seems. But if there is anything to this line of thought, then clearly it will work as well for allison brains as for spongy ones. A corollary worth noting is that familiar office computers, and even big laboratory computers, won't in any serious sense have states with intentional powers. For unlike the robot-chimp's brain, and indeed unlike our brains, commercial digital computers aren't designed to interact with specific features of the external world, but simply to be easily adjustable, labour-saving devices. It is probably also worth noting that nothing in all this is supposed to show that computers are conscious. One of the Radio 4 announcers

advertised Searle as demolishing the theory that "thermostats have feelings". This is no doubt how many people have understood Searle, and indeed what gives the Chinese room argument, with its talk of understanding Chinese, and consequent connotations of some kind of inner illumination, much of its appeal. But that's not how the Chinese room argument is intended. Searle says very little about consciousness, and certainly his explicit statements present the Chinese room argument as about aboutness, not about feelings.

In the third lecture Searle continues his attack on cognitive science. Here the target is not just the strong claim that computers can think, but any attempt to use the computer analogy to illuminate the workings of our brains. Searle is sceptical about the existence of identifiable levels of cerebral organization, analogous to "software" programmes, mediating between our neuronal "wetware" and our mental life. But he admits that future research might yet prove him wrong, and indeed mentions examples of existing computer-influenced work, such as David Marr's book on *Vision*, which many would argue have already discredited his pessimism.

After this Searle elaborates his own picture of the sciences of man, in which, as one would expect, the intentionality of human thought plays a central role. There is a good argument in the fifth lecture. Many contemporary philosophers believe in the possibility of "special sciences" in the human realm, whose categories are indefinable in physical terms, but which nevertheless deliver some degree of predictive generalization. Searle points out that this won't do. For if there are general truths about what will happen, say, in given economic circumstances, then, as Searle puts it, "the molecules will have to be blowing in the right direction" on all such occasions. But this would be on absurd coincidence, given the supposed mismatch between the concepts of economics and the concepts of physics. Searle takes this argument to demonstrate a radical division between understanding in terms of intentionality and explanation in terms of predictive generalizations. But the argument could as well be run the other way. Those impressed by the extent to which economic life, and indeed interpersonal life, is predictable, might conclude instead that the concepts of the human sciences must after all be commensurate with those of physics.

The final lecture is about free will. Here Searle will disappoint those who expect him to use the supposed divide between mental and physical explanation to find a niche for human freedom. For Searle recognizes that being undetermined under a mental description doesn't give us free will, given that we are also physical beings and what happens is fixed by physics. He does allow that, as agents, we have an inescapable belief in our own free will. But nevertheless concludes, it isn't really so. One only wonders why someone who is so disappointed by our prejudice that we have special powers of free choice is so certain that we humans have special powers of intentional thought.

Understanding Identity Statements by Thomas V. Morris has recently been published (150pp. Aberdeen University Press. £12.50; paperback, £8.50, 0 08 030388 9). In Part One Morris analyses identity statements under such headings as "The Objectual Analysis" and "Reference, Necessity and Information", while in Part Two he examines Leibniz's Law and the difficulties it raises in respect of cross-category identities.

Relating to machines

Stuart Sutherland

SHERY TURKLE
The Second Self: Computers and the human spirit
387pp. Granada. £12.50 (paperback, £6).
0 246 12261 1

In the early days of market research, the investigator used to interview a few randomly selected people on their attitudes to a given product. In the light of their replies, he would try to construct a plausible story about their image of the product and about how that image was derived. He would take into account the style of life, the needs and desires of his respondents, and in interpreting their views he would not hesitate to use any Freudian ideas that came into his head: he might, for example, allege that a given brand of perfume was threatening to women because the bottle was too overtly phallic. After this method had been in use for many years, it occurred to the market research organizations that the interviewer might bring to his task his own prejudices and preconceptions and that he might unconsciously influence the replies he obtained. Henceforth, they used this rather haphazard method of research only as a means of setting up hypotheses which they then tested by detailed questionnaires administered to a large sample. Sometimes the questionnaires bore out the ideas of the original investigator; often they did not.

Sociology progresses more slowly than business. Unstructured interviewing and observation, particularly when carried out by someone living in the community under investigation, is now somewhat grandly called "ethnography" and it is rarely thought prudent to try to confirm the results by a more systematic survey. Sherry Turkle's study of the effects of computers on people has the merits and demerits of the ethnographic method: it supplies some interesting hypotheses, but they need to be confirmed. She interviewed over two hundred children and the same number of "grown men" (the reason for the use of inverted commas will shortly appear), all of whom were engaged with computers. Perhaps the worst fault of her

study is that she did not interview a similar number of people engaged on some totally different pursuit, such as the study of history, to make sure that her findings really do reflect exposure to computers and are not merely the product of contemporary American culture.

The most interesting of her speculations about children is that interaction with computers makes them see themselves in a different way. Since they think of computers as intelligent and able to converse, Aristotle's definition of man as a rational animal is no longer enough to segregate man from inanimate objects. The children fall back on psychological notions - computers do not have emotions, they cannot feel pain and they cannot cheat since they are not moral beings. Professor Turkle maintains that because these children see computers as having intellect but not feelings, they come to dissociate the two when thinking of people and she is distinctly alarmist about the consequences of this dissociation. She claims that in people the two are "inseparable", but she offers no evidence for her allegation that "the child's sharpened distinction between intellect and feelings can lead to a shallow and sentimental way of thinking about 'feelings'". One could argue that anyone who confused the two would be in a poor way and likely to make a mess of both.

She maintains that according to their personalities different children develop different programming styles. The "hard" programmer sets out to obtain mastery over the computer, the "soft" programmer feels "part of the system" and "negotiates" with it. In terms of working programs, the distinction is unclear and she did not take the precaution of having the children's programs assessed by experienced programmers to discover whether they could systematically be divided into hard and soft.

On the issue of whether early exposure to computing benefits children, she is divided. Interacting with a computer and conversing with it through a visual display may for some children provide an easy way into mathematics (or even, in one child, into writing poetry), particularly if they are frightened of making mistakes before the teacher or the class. The computer may also provide a sop to loneliness.

Shoppers' guide

Jeffrey Hackney

JOHN BEAR
Computer Wimp
281pp. Hutchinson. £6.95.
0 09 158831 6

Computer Wimp aims to list 166 things everyone should know before buying a first (small, business) computer, or giving up on the one they already have. It is said to be packed with information on how to buy; on the shameful warranty situation; computer fear, anguish and despair; and a great deal more. There are over a hundred illustrations, mainly old line drawings with computers anachronistically insinuated, and the general style of presentation is Haight-Ashbury Global Village Gothic: the writing has the kind of sincere directness that seemed so refreshing twenty years ago. Nevertheless, some of it is amusing, and some of the advice, when you can extricate it from the ornamentation, is genuinely helpful. The tip not to discard the previous system as soon as you acquire microchip facilities is as valuable as it is obvious. The directive never to buy first is no longer universally valid, however, and those who followed advice to wait till prices tumbled before they bought a BBC micro will doubt its universal validity. The advice on asking for your equipment is almost recklessly witty, and the book as a whole is a victim of the delays inherent in book publishing. In that some of it is already out of date, some of the data about memory, prices, add-ons and word processing possibilities are already history.

But *Computer Wimp* is more seriously flawed. John Bear is dismissive of some writing on the grounds that authors do not have the expertise to give "perspective". There are two problems with this. First, our particular authority, a history, reveals him to be disaster-prone, and

Second, and more important, he is tripped by the pride of being a 1975 computer owner, and the gloomy consequences of that are misleading for a novice in 1984. If someone were to write a book on how to buy a car and proceeded to warn his readers that when he first started to drive he had to pump the tyres up every morning, after he had warmed up the spark plugs in the oven, and that he had to jack up one back wheel in order to crank-start the engine, we would accuse him of something like a category mistake. And yet the relative time lapse is about the same. What someone aiming to buy a computer actually needs is a simple book, probably no more than five pages long, directing him to the computer magazines and giving a simple checklist of how to go about acquiring computer, printer and software. He also needs to be warned that today's computer advertisers are the spiritual successors of yesterday's soap-powder peddlars. He needs to discover which machines are overpriced, over-praised and over here.

What this book makes up for in jokes, then, it lacks in straightforward critical advice. And there is a problem about the title. A wimp is deflated on the jacket as an unhappy and frustrated person. That did not tally with youthful usage as I hear it, so I did a small search. Ignoring the "Window-based Integrated Mouse-driven Program" acronym, a sample of students produced a fairly uniform range of meaning, restricted to the male of the species and indicating feebleness of spirit, speed and intellect. I was accompanied by awkwardness and lack of style. Clearly not the same thing at all. I was tempted to discover, thanks to a courteous lexicographer, that this kind of less agreed with the provisional definition on the cards at the OED, and even more pleased to be able to redress the sexist limitation on this particular piece of abuse by discovering that Partridge confined it to young women, and thought that it might have been passed from "wimp" to "wimpy".

On the other hand, children can use the computer as a safe way of obtaining control over something and thus need not develop relationships with other children. Surprisingly, she hardly comments on the dangers of home computers, which for some children can be far more absorbing than television and which can therefore remove them in their leisure hours from all contact with other people.

Turning to adult programmers, Turkle maintains that they too have different styles of programming which reflect their inner needs. She makes the rather implausible suggestion that one reason why people strive to acquire a complete understanding of their programs and of how they are assembled and executed is that they cannot understand their country's economy: she forgets that curiosity and the desire to solve problems are among the most fundamental drives in most mammals and need not be the by-product of frustration of some other drive.

The attempt to obtain total understanding and total mastery over the computer reaches its apogee in the computer hacker. He is to be found in most large computer installations and is dedicated to obtaining complete mastery of the system: he devotes himself to invading other users' files (the strange sections of the computer holding their programs and data), to fixing bugs in the system, to solving problems by ingenious and - to the extent that they were not foreseen by the designers of the systems programs - underhand tricks, and sometimes to the invention of elaborate computer games, like "Dungeons and Dragons". It has become a tradition for hackers to emerge only at night because until recently most large computer systems were fully loaded in the daytime. The hacker's fascination with programming dominates his life and he abandons almost all activities that would reduce the time spent at the console. He is, in fact, an addict. Turkle provides a splendid description of the hacker and his habits, but she is on less sure ground when she claims that many people become hackers as a defence against ugliness or self-hatred. It is true that hackers may choose to withdraw from the rest of the world, but they often form a lively enough community with one another. Does one have to hate oneself to become a monk or a nun? And are potential hackers really uglier students than potential historians?

Implicit throughout Turkle's arguments is the assumption that dedication to an intellectual end is bad whereas dedication to "relationships" or to the arts is good: computer buffs have failed to grow up. But professional singing or piano-playing may require almost as much dedication as hacking. It is true that much but not all hacking is a selfish enterprise, but then so is professional chess. There is something unusual about anyone who is dedicated to anything, but rather than claiming that hacking is a "flight from relationships with people to relationship with machine - a defensive manoeuvre", Turkle might have tried to establish whether the incidence of mental illness was greater in hackers than in historians.

The final way in which computers have influ-

enced people is, according to Turkle, through the model that programs can provide of our own thought processes; here the most important work is in Artificial Intelligence (AI), the attempt to write programs which do things that had they been done by a person would be thought to require intelligence. Her main fear is that the existence of intelligent programs may make people see themselves as machines and remove any scope for notions such as freedom of the will. But the pressure to regard our bodies as machines has been increasing for many years and comes as much from advances in our understanding of the brain as from AI. Brain lesions or the administration of a vast number of psychotropic drugs can be shown to have highly predictable effects on intellectual capacities, mood, emotion and behaviour. If the brain obeys the causal laws of physics and chemistry, what room does this leave for freedom of the will? Nobody has devised a satisfactory answer though many have tried.

Turkle is also worried by the fact that people working in AI often use some of its concepts metaphorically to describe their own minds. The worry is groundless. First, many workers in AI have a well-developed sense of humour and a desire to shock: Marvin Minsky was surely displaying both attributes when he described a program as "self-destructive" and referred to a mistake it made as a "Freudian slip". It is equally foolish to take seriously the proposal that a computer with a sufficient number of interacting intelligent programs would be conscious. Second, there is no evidence that the decisions workers in AI make about their lives or the attitudes they adopt towards others are systematically different from those of people in other occupations. As Turkle fully acknowledges elsewhere in the book, it seems improbable that computers will radically change our view of ourselves, though they may continue to throw light on the nature of intelligence.

All in all, *The Second Self* is an interesting but frustrating book. It contains many ideas but they are often loosely formulated and ill-substantiated. Moreover, although it demonstrates that computers can fascinate and even obsess people of all ages, it does not really answer the question why this should be so. One suspects that computer freaks are more obsessed than bridge-players, radio hams, train-spotters, football supporters, crossword addicts and so on, but why? Is it that the computer is always available and does not need two to play? Is it the excitement of getting a program to run? Is it the feeling that if one just stays at the console a little longer the last bug will be removed? Is it that a program is always something entirely of one's own, like a piece of writing, in contrast to mathematical proof which, unless one is a professional mathematician, will be extremely similar to existing proofs of the same theorem? Or is it, as Turkle maintains, the desire to establish mastery over a machine which constantly interacts with the user? For whatever reason, computers satisfy many people's intellectual curiosity and their love of solving problems, which are after all as much a part of the human mind as love and hate.

TURING'S MAN

Western Culture in the Computer Age
J. D. Bolter

"The most illuminating book that has yet come my way on the topic of artificial intelligence."
A. J. Ayer

"Immensely stimulating... I know of no other work that is comparable, of no other that deals so imaginatively with the intellectual consequences of the arrival of the computer in our civilisation."
S. R. Gubaud, editor of *Daedalus*.
£12.95

DUCKWORTH

The Old Piano Factory
43 Gloucester Crescent, London NW1

1431 10 156

The devil's circuitry

Lou Burnard

PETER LARGE
The Micro Revolution Revisited
216pp. Pinter. £9.95.
0861873793

MICHAEL SHALLIS
The Silicon Idol: The micro revolution and its social implications
188pp. Oxford University Press. £8.95.
0192158775

In the past twenty-five years the computer has been transformed from a mysterious piece of scientific apparatus attended by serious men in white coats into a suitable gift for precocious eight-year-olds. It has achieved the status of a consumer durable, becoming a mark of social standing. Unlike the washing-machine or the home video, however, it has also completely transformed the working environment and even (for those who still have any) the nature of work itself. Its indiscriminate reorganization of every aspect of economic activity has not come about overnight, nor yet is it complete, but the rate of change is increasing.

For Peter Large who, as technology correspondent for the *Guardian*, must be—as it were—in touch with the leading edge, the home computer is only the most conspicuous part of a grand transformation scene in which the massive replacement of our communications systems, the spread of automation, the growth of corporate data-bases and the development of the cashless society all have starring roles. It is not just manufacturing industry which is presented with the simple choice of "automate or liquidate", non-manufacturing industry is now undergoing even greater turmoil, as word-processors drain typing pools, data-bases relocate filing-clerks and expert systems render consultants redundant.

Although the impetus behind these changes is primarily the old commercial imperative to do more of the same better and faster, their combined effect, it is asserted, will together prove to be qualitative rather than quantitative. The computer is the leading edge of a third industrial revolution in which the old dialectics of labour and capital, of productivity and consumerism will lose their significance. A new utopianism, or an old despair, grips apparently sane commentators as their imaginations attempt to grapple with the microchip: it will bring about the end of civilization as we know it; it will bring about a land of milk and honey produced by small collectives in which no one has to work unless they want to; it will create a new disaffected peasantry only controllable by means of an inhuman totalitarianism.

Perhaps it is the headiness of little know-

ledge which encourages the wilder extrapolations of the futurologists. Sober reflection gives no reason to suppose that the indisputably amazing advances in the development of the micro-processor will necessarily be paralleled by equivalent advances in its supporting technology. Most computers still communicate with us by means of an expensive and inefficient luminous screen and a keyboard which was designed over a century ago to be ergonomically inefficient, so that the "typewriter" (as its operator was then called) could not go too fast for the machine's delicate innards. More user-friendly methods of communication are still a long way off, despite the current availability (at a price) of "pucks", "mice" and touch-sensitive screens. Speech recognition systems, into which vast amounts of research money are currently being poured, may prove to be as elusive in this decade as automatic translation of natural language was in the last, and for similar reasons. An allied object of scepticism, at least among the currently computer literate, is the blithe assumption that computer literacy can, or even should, be acquired as simply and as easily as the ordinary sort.

These two reservations do not appear to have occurred to either Michael Shallis or Peter Large: their books have little else in common. Large's analysis is clearly aimed at a receptive audience which is, like him, decently agnostic, mildly satirical, technologically aware and sensibly concerned about social issues. Shallis, who teaches at Oxford's Department of External Studies, is rather less sure of his audience. The defensive note struck in his preface recurs: "any critic of technology is liable to be labelled a Luddite and I would not be surprised if the term was used about myself". The Luddites, however, were driven to their futile activities by technological changes that effected their lives directly and immediately; Shallis appears to be motivated more by an altruistic desire to save the rest of us from apocalyptic decay, having already purified himself by banishing television, washing-machine and even electric toaster from his own home.

There is more than a hint of the lay preacher in several of his strictures: "To reduce intelligence to mere reason is... degrading and unwholesome"; "The computer was born with 'bad blood'"; "Information technology... is the invention of the devil". Not surprisingly, his greatest scorn is reserved for those loonies of the artificial intelligence who persist in finding (or modelling) fainties at the bottom of the research lab: "It seems to me that before computers have religious or ethical codes built into them, the computer scientists might adopt some of their own to direct their purposes in a suitably moral way."

The home of hardware

Ivan Fallon

ROBERT SOBEL
IBM: Colossus in Transition
360pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.95.
0283991453

It is difficult to imagine it, but the great IBM which so dominates the computer world today was once like any other averagely small, averagely successful, averagely managed concern with its average share of dramas, of booms and (very) near busts. Its beginnings were far less distinguished than those of many less successful companies. A wheeler-dealer called Charles Flint, whom Robert Sobel describes as a "supreme individualist" but who may remind others of all too many would-be conglomerators in the City of London, put together, around the turn of the century, a ragbag of unspectacular and unpromising companies with a few paper shuffles and a bit of not-quite-dishonest accounting "creativity".

The centre of what was to grow into the "colossus" of the title made clocks, which the energetic Mr Flint, a believer in free trade (but only if you were a monopoly), promoted by buying out all his competitors. By 1910 the company dominated its industry and reported sales of more than \$1m—hardly earth-shattering even adjusting for inflation. To this Flint

welded a company called the Computing Scale Company of America which made a set of scales that enabled a clerk not only to weigh an item but to calculate its cost at the same time. It also made cheese slicers. There was no logic in the merger at all. But Charles Flint, who preceded Jim Slater by nearly seventy years, employed all the same arguments that would be used later by the conglomerators. There is an uncanny familiarity about the companies; they both measured things, and there were benefits to "allied consolidations". There were, indeed, principally to Flint, whose interest in the new company was primarily capital gain. In other words, he was a share pusher.

To these two, Flint added a third "allied consolidation": he took over the Tabulating Machine Company which made machines used largely for census reports. Flint called the resulting amalgam by the ungainly name Computing-Tabulating-Recording, or CTR, and it became what is probably the most successful company in the world.

The management was not provided by Flint, who found a chief executive, Thomas Watson, who joined in 1914 and retired in 1956 at the age of eighty-two. The colossus was established during that period: by 1957 the sales figure of \$1m had grown to \$1 billion.

By 1924 Watson had changed the name to International Business Machines—an interesting indication of his thinking (in Britain an "I" in a company's name stood not for "international" but for "imperial").



"The Caxton Analogy." This cartoon is reproduced from *The Joy of Computers*, by Peter Laurie, a well-informed and excellently illustrated book about the wanners and customs of the contemporary computer (1991pp. Hutchinson. £9.95. 0091350105).

Ironically, Shallis appears to earn his living by teaching people how to use this diabolical device; indeed, doing it rather well, to judge by the two chapters of straightforward technical explication included here. Rather less satisfactory is his fondness for Large Truths (for example that the history of technology is one of increasing abstraction from reality) which tend to obscure as much as they illuminate. The bogeyman of Scientific Reductionism takes a terrible posting in these pages, as does the principle of scientific neutrality and the idea that the "so-called Protestant work ethic" (a favourite phrase) can be replaced overnight. For Shallis, because the telephone offers only a disembodied voice, it can provide only an unsatisfactory surrogate for human communication; systems which impose only such methods of "interfacing" people are therefore "imperialistic". His doubts about large computer systems are not without value: they do indeed malfunction and do require proper controls and careful validation; this does not, however, make them intrinsically useless or evil.

Despite an engaging dottiness (there are apparently "many cases of people's psychological state adversely affecting the performance of a computer system"), despite the patent meretriciousness of some of his targets (the remainder being straw men or lost causes), despite even his earnestness, Shallis remains curiously unpersuasive, perhaps more because of his wooden prose than his puritanism. By contrast, Large, as a professional journalist, is an adept of the new technology. His book is a composite of short paragraphs, pithy sayings, useful statistics, non-technical explanation, occasional anecdote, trends to note, memorabilia, objects of grave concern. Its words were clearly not composed but processed. No important new development is left unsummarized, no cause for concern deprived of equal time. And yet reading it as a book is remarkably unsatisfying. It is meant to be "blipped"—Alvin Toffler's expressive coinage for what will become the characteristic mode of human information processing once Shallis's nightmares have become reality.

market; its next biggest competitor, Sperry Rand had 12.1 per cent. Nobody else was even in single figure, and no one has been able to dent IBM's market share since.

Professor Sobel relates the story in a chatty, straightforward way, seldom deviating from the central historical theme. We always know clearly where we are, and how each move adds to each new product came about. There are also helpful little tables which clearly tell where we are in revenue and profit terms, a very relevant yardstick for the financial analyst as well as the corporate historian.

But the second half of the book is much less interesting, and at times unsatisfactory. It was originally written in 1981, and the statistics largely end in 1979; so does that thesis, which means that some important events in the electronic and computing world are not properly considered. For instance, the revolution in financial information with the emergence of Reuters and Teletext has all happened in the past five years, and IBM is now entering that field in partnership with Merrill Lynch. There are whole new areas of information technology which are very much a part of the transition of the colossus but which Professor Sobel ignores. He touches on the challenge from Japan, but again one has the feeling that much has moved on since he last updated the book. But for a clear, uncomplicated history of the creation and early to middle years of a giant, his book is ideal.

Following the story

Tom Shippey

The creators of *Lords of Midnight* (the current "state of the art" computer game) make their readers an offer in the booklet that goes with the game tape. It is that the first person to defeat Doomdark in the game, and to copy all his screens as he goes along, can send in the pictorial record of what has happened, and have it rewritten as a fantasy novel at the game-designers' expense, publication guaranteed. When this book appears, it will be something new, something more (or less) than ghost-writing. It will be a book co-created (one does not like to say "authored") by a writer, a programmer, an element of chance built into the computer, and most obviously by a person who probably cannot write at all, but is good at puzzles of strategy. An oddity, no doubt, or a gimmick. Nevertheless the idea does raise questions, not to mention hackles. Is this the shape of the future? What happens when the computers go up another generation?

Least dramatically, but perhaps in the long run most interesting, what does all this tell us about fiction? *Lords of Midnight* is poised between being a story and being a game, and one's literary impulse is to dismiss it as a freakish hybrid. However it does satisfy some sort of fictional impulse. Maybe the passive story, the story-that-someone-else-tells-you, has held sway from Stone Age camp-fires to now only because there was no way of organizing anything better. I am confident that the first *Lords of Midnight* novel will not be any good. There is an uneasy sense, though, that in comparing it with *Ulysses*, say, or Margaret Drabble, one is comparing a human baby to an adult chimpanzee. There is no doubt which is the stronger now. But that is not the point.

Computer games are intrinsically new, the product of the past decade. At the moment they still have "limitation" written all over them, and they betray the still unassimilated marks of at least three separate strains of ancestry. One of these is the "arcade game", pioneered by *Space Invaders*. These are essentially games of reflex and motor control, which remain the same regardless of what fiction the creators dream up as a disguise. In *Penetrator*, for instance, you are a low-level fighter pilot hugging the ground, avoiding missiles, bombing radar stations, and aiming for a narrow slit with a cache of neutron bombs inside. But there would be little difference if you opted for a "Star Wars" plot, or if you decided to play *Shadowfax* instead: "Ride the mighty Shadowfax in the war against the dark forces of Mordor [sic]. Use your bow of lightning to destroy the enemy—but beware—their touch is death!" These games are extraordinarily successful time-consumers, and very hard to stop playing, but the fictional component in them (though clearly necessary) is minimal, a catalyst only.

The interesting thing is that "arcade games" can move a stage up and take in strategy, in a way which clearly looks forward to the full-fledged "adventure game". Take *Ale Atac*. The fiction of this determinedly jokey little game is that the player is trapped in a haunted house. He has to move around, continually operating the keyboard and either avoiding or zapping pumpkins, witches and other bogies, till he finds three sections of a golden key and brings them back to the room with the entrance. So far, not too different from *Penetrator*. But this is a game which it is impossible to win by motor control alone. There are, by my count (certainly wrong), ninety-four rooms in *Ale Atac*; to say nothing of stairs, passages, trapdoors and secret ways—a different set of these latter for Knights or Wizards or Sorcerers. Many of them are locked. To get in and find the sections of golden key you will need a red key, a blue key, or a green key, or maybe a yellow one. In any case it is very hard to pick up the red key, guarded by a highly dangerous mummy, unless you already have the red leaf to distract the mummy. In the same way you need the gold coins to keep off Dracula, the money bag to distract the hunchback, and the blue spanner for some purpose I have never been able to fathom. And—a stroke of brilliant economy!—you can only carry three things at once. There is no way to win at *Ale Atac*, then, unless you have a plan, and a map (I made you have to draw yourself, and update it for each successful game). With that you can

work out which keys you need, which articles you can drop. Without it, speed of finger may give you a good long run, but lead in the end only to a little cross and mortuary tunes.

Mapping in fact seems to be the main current activity of the computer game fan. What computers are good at is remembering very large numbers of "Yes/No" decisions. They are ideally suited, then, for producing mazes. And even the "adventure games", which have no "arcade" or motor control element, show quite clearly that their fictions have been designed to produce scenarios rather like that of *Ale Atac*. Take for instance *Twin Kingdom Valley*. In this, once you have loaded the program into the computer, you find yourself standing on a path outside a cabin. Follow the path, or enter the cabin (the computer asks)? You go into the cabin. There you find a lamp. It is not lit, but if you then follow the right path you will come to a quarry, which exists (in games like this) for the alert player to tell the computer to pick up a flint and let him light the lamp. You have to remember to keep turning the lamp off, or the computer will decide it is out of fuel just when you most need it. But with the lamp on, you can go down a hole, which may take you to the witches' maze (almost no escape), or the Hall of the Forest King, or to Watersmeet, near which—the computer says—a wise man may find "the secret of life".

The point is, that although you are now in a landscape, or even a plot, and surrounded by recognizable cast of characters, the game is still a "map-and-pick-up" one. Some of the rules are very like *Ale Atac*. If you go into one room, the computer will tell you: "An ill giant is here". The right strategy is to be carrying a jug of water from Watersmeet, and to get the giant to drink it. This cures him and makes him grateful. He is very useful from then on for killing dragons, or carrying heavy booty. But—another infuriating stroke of economy—if he sees a weapon he always picks it up, and he always drops whatever else he is carrying. The game then becomes a kind of monstrous mental juggle, while you work out what are the safe routes to take, where you are bound to lose the giant, where you are bound to need the glect, when your lamp will run out, and many other factors besides. Nevertheless *Ale Atac* is curious: its boundaries and its personnel are not fixed, and there is a sense in which entering another room in it is like turning over another page. In both cases, there is only the implicit guarantee that what happens will not feel wholly out of place.

"Arcade games" lead to "puzzle games", then, and "puzzle games" to "adventure games". This latter group, however, has a second and non-electronic ancestor in "role-playing games" like *Dungeons and Dragons*. You can for instance get combined book-and-programme packages like Joe Dever and Gary Chalk's *Flights from the Dark*, which follows fairly strict D and D rules—rolling dice at Combat Skill and Endurance Points at the start, then working your way through a maze of the numbered paragraphs with a decision at the end of each one, with frequent halts for "combat" of an "arcade game" type. Games of this type feel rather slow and unchallenging: there is too much book in them and not enough program. They do raise a serious doubt, though, and that is why such evidently escapable fictions have seized the computer market. Is it because people who are good with computers are not very good with people? Stories breed late of silent children, absorbed to their own fantasy worlds, tapping out messages to other children on their VDUs, and otherwise taking no notice of their companions at all.

And (than there is the Tolkien ancestry. This is very strong indeed (see *Shadowfax* above, and note also the immense success of the *Top bit game*, No 1 in *Shacklar User's* list of "Top Fifty Spectrum Classics"). Even *Lords of Midnight* looks (as a plot) little more than a calque on *Lord of the Rings*. In fifteen pages of introductory booklet I counted at least a dozen major Tolkien borrowings, from Doomdark the Witchking (a cross between Sauron, Saruman and a Ringwraith), to Rothron (or Gandalf), the Joe-fear (or Black Breath), the Moon Ring (or One Ring) and Morkin (a pretty clear "halfling"). There was even a Gollum-figure (I made you have to draw yourself, and update it for each successful game). With that you can

line is based on Tolkien's "double plot" strategy: evil is opposed both by open warfare of the Aragorn type, and by secret penetration by a single character aiming to destroy a source of magic power. One can see that the "map-and-pick-up" style of adventure games is conditioned by computer technology; the role-playing streak may also be inevitable. But why have the Tolkien derivatives got such a hold? And what does this tell us about fiction?

One thought is that the Tolkien books may have had hidden virtues just as narrative. The Hobbit as a book converts with curious ease to a computer game. It was, in a way, a "map-and-pick-up" book! Bilbo found the trolls' key, which opened the trolls' cave, which gave him Sting, which he needed for the spiders. He also had the ring, while Gandalf had the map, and Thorin had the other key, and Bard had the arrow. There were mazes and riddles and dead-ends and dungeons. It's true that Tolkien disliked electronics and had no idea about computers. Still, maybe there are laws of poeconomy and of linearity, which he unconsciously obeyed and which are now being experimentally rediscovered. They are more obvious in computer games because of the games'

All is but toys

Julia Briggs

Notoriously unlucky, *Macbeth* has the doubtful honour of being the first Shakespeare play to be turned into a computer game; the pursuit of goblins through Athenian woods and ghosts over Elsinore's battlements must soon follow. Oxford Digital Enterprises have produced four adventure games inspired by the play, interspersed with question-and-answer sessions that tackle the nitty-gitty of character and motivation, thus ballasting entertainment with education. A text of the play is also provided, with notes intended to reassure those who hold Shakespeare and his well-intentioned advocates in suspicion. The obvious target is the schoolchild creeping like snail unwillingly towards O level, but the games are amusing and ingenious, while the knowledge of the play is at least as important as a knowledge of how computer adventure games work. Inevitably they illuminate some of the play's more forgettable moments along the way—you will need to know who Sweno was and what he was doing on St Colme's Inch. Odd bits of seventeenth-century folklore are dotted about among jokes as whimsical as any sporran, and if the games never attempt to capture the dark fatality of the original, they provide a lively literary quiz complete with sound and pictures.

The program begins with a thunderclap and a brilliantly animated sequence of graphics to illustrate the first scene. Three black shapes shift continually in a bleak landscape until they finally resolve their formlessness into paddock, cat and owl. The player must now be *Macbeth*, and dispose first of a mounted gallowglass, then of Macdonwald, in suitably Shakespearean style. The graphics adjust in response to the correct instructions, and Macdonwald's head can be placed on the battlements, where it drips fitfully, if not fearfully. A number of rather less plausible actions must then be carried out if you are to reach the heath with Banquo and receive the witches' ell-hall. Much lateral thinking is called for, and more patience, since a program written for a home computer is necessarily limited in vocabulary and syntax; the inventors of *Macbeth* have used every byte of available memory in their efforts to include as much Shakespearean vocabulary as possible, but the machine finds verbal richness and variety indigestible. Putting Shakespeare into computerspeak invites Johnson's comment, "It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

Each game is drawn from a different section of the play; the third sets the player to collect the less gruesome ingredients of the witches' cauldron (birth-entranced babes and blaspheming Jews are tactfully omitted). This is played out against a sequence of different locations, with some of the objects needed forming part of the pictures themselves; as in old-fashioned puzzle books (find the hidden key, or whatever). Here yew berries must be picked in the moon's eclipse, root of hemlock dugged in the

complete lack (in two senses) of "point". They have no moral; whereas *The Lord of the Rings* by contrast was perfectly obviously "all about" power and responsibility. They also have no "point" in the medieval or Chaucerian sense, meaning "telling detail", feats narrated for their own sake, verisimilitude at the expense of utility. By contrast again *The Lord of the Rings* was full of strictly-speaking redundant vignettes. Critics naturally concentrate on significance and depth, so the novelistic tradition has taught us. Beneath both, though, there is an appeal in raw event. Tolkien had this, and the game-creators recognize it. It is something they are contracted to supply, and for it we have almost no critical vocabulary at all.

Lords of Midnight (Beyond. £9.95. 48K Spectrum). *Penetrator* (Melbourne House. £6.95. 48K Spectrum). *Shadowfax* (Postern. BBC). *Ale Atac* (Ultimate. £5.50. 48K Spectrum). *Twin Kingdom Valley* (Bug-byte. £7.95. Commodore 64, BBC. 48K Spectrum). *Flight from the Dark* (Sparrow Books. £1.50, and Five Ways Software. £6.95. 48K Spectrum). *The Hobbit* (Melbourne House. £14.95. 48K Spectrum).

dark, and fenny snakes, owlets and newts retrieved from their habitats in various unexpected ways.

The second and fourth games are altogether more dramatic, since they are played against the clock, and their actions are rather more consonant with those of the play. For though the computer adventure partakes of the secret, mysterious and riddling nature of the witches as the proverbially open book cannot, the sinister atmosphere, the sense of night more and the ascendancy of darkness are not easily reproduced on the bright screen, amidst joky asides. Yet these two games do suggest something of the hectic activity that flares up, to be succeeded within the play itself by horror or languor. In the second, the player as Lady Macbeth must find her way through the contrived corridors of Inverness Castle to locate instructions and ingredients for the stirrup-cup to welcome Duncan, then feed him, drug the guards, and finally perform the murder, all within an hour. Creaking floorboards, a replete mandrake, Angus and Ross wandering at random about the castle, and Macbeth's last-minute hesitations all make the task more difficult. One feels the force of "twere well it were done quickly". The last game finds Macbeth defending Dunsinane against the invader, aided only by Seyton. After reading Dr Finlay's journal for Lady Macbeth's medical notes, hanging out banners, tossing a censer, and assembling the beggipes to play "Auld Lang Syne" ("That was awful. You're out of practise", comments the computer) you may yet save yourself if your nerves are still sufficiently steady to type in the right instructions. . . . The hermeneutics of the computer game, after all, are irreconcilable with traditional literary forms. Only one route leads out of the silicon maze, and most of the time we are following the wrong clues.

Similar home truisms turn up in the question-and-answer sessions that alternate with the games. Here a certain Sigmund F. cross-questions Macbeth and his lady in an attempt to define their nature and motives. Inevitably these interrogations smack of the old "how-mony-children-had-Lady-Macbeth" chestnut, treating the characters as real people rather than walking shadows, poor puppets awaiting the decision of individual actors to animate them. At the same time they consistently direct attention to the play's central problems, several of which do lie in the nature of the inconsistencies they reveal. Ultimately the mechanical character of computer games cannot accommodate the organic genius of the play; but as a man of his time Shakespeare would at least have acknowledged the prescription of *duice et utile* that underwrites this attempt. And *Macbeth* ranks as one of the most varied, inventive and original computer games yet written.

Macbeth is marketed by Creative Sparks (Thom-EMI) for the Commodore 64, at £14.95.

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Not many months ago, I employed the expression "Promethean" in the course of an article for a respectable American magazine. One of the editors telephoned me to go over the piece. In the course of the conversation, he asked politely what the word "Promethean" might mean. I had a similar experience, shortly afterwards and with another paper no less reputable, when I used the term "Gadarene". In both instances, the editors confessed their own ignorance rather than (as happens occasionally) taking refuge in the claim that "the customers won't get it". In both instances, they were persuaded to look it up and to agree that a common synonym would be hard to come by. In both instances, I had used the terms in a rather obvious and even hackneyed manner. I have never related the story to any American university professor and been greeted with even the smallest surprise (except in one admittedly isolated case where the professor inquired the meaning of the word "Gadarene").

Now comes a report from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which states quite plainly that the teaching of the most elementary "civilization" has all but disappeared from the campus. Academics have been complaining for ages that they cannot make the simplest assumptions about what their students "know", and the NEH study gives some idea of why this must be. It has become possible to graduate from 72 per cent of colleges and universities here without having studied American literature or history, from 75 per cent without having studied European history, and from 86 per cent without having considered Greek or Roman antiquity. The liberal arts, to coin a phrase, are becoming extinct.

The report was written by William J. Bennett, chairman of the government-funded Endowment, and early copies became available late last month. The statistical indexes are only

a part of the story, but they are an impressive part. Graduates in English have declined by 57 per cent since 1970, in philosophy by 41 per cent over the same period, and in history by an astonishing 62 per cent. At the same time, the total number of degrees awarded rose by 11 per cent. It is no exaggeration, then, for the NEH report to say that students are graduating while "lacking even the most rudimentary knowledge about the history, literature, art, and philosophical foundations of their nation and their civilization".

The report blames the abysmal decline on the dissolution of the curriculum in the 1960s, and the subsequent claims of specialization and competitive inter-college "marketing". This allotment suggests that the deadly requirement of "even-handedness" is at work. The mass production of semi-literacy can hardly be blamed on a decades-old political turmoil about "content", and Mr Bennett himself uses the hideous phrase "vocational payoff" (hardly a 1960s concern) to identify what is warped in today's priorities. Indeed, while we're on the subject, his own prose gives little ground for optimism: "The humanities must not be argued for as something that will make our students refined, nor should the humanities be presented as a nonrigorous interlude where the young can chew over their feelings, emotive, or rehash their opinions." The recommendations of his report (banned, inevitably, on the work of a huge and cumbersome "study group") do not exactly soar to the empyrean—whatever that is—either. For example: "Colleges and universities must reward excellent teaching in hiring, promotion and tenure decisions." Rather lamely, the study suggests a new and better reading list, ranging from Homer through Dante to Dickens, Marx, T. S. Eliot, the Gettysburg Address and concluding wistfully with "such authors as Hawthorne, Melville, Twain and Faulkner". Yet, as Walter Jackson Bate put it recently, "The subject matter—the world's great literature—is unrivaled. All we need is the chance and the imagination to help it work upon the minds and characters of the

millions of students to whom we are responsible."

Still, Bennett and his team are obviously on to something. There must be a connection between the eclipse of humanities teaching and the number of sub-literate or semi-educated letters one gets from people signing themselves Ph.D.; between the decline of English studies and the seeming inability of public persons to make a coherent speech; between all this and the humdrum style of the press, the jargon of the bureaucracy and the cheerful, bottomless ignorance to be encountered when making campus speaking tours. Nor is there any reason for non-Americans to be smug or patronizing: the United States is suffering from an extreme form of a general blight. Mr Bennett refers judiciously, as he is bound to do, to Matthew Arnold. He ends with a rather good near-tautology from Walter Lippman. "What enables men to know more than their ancestors is that they start with a knowledge of what their ancestors have already learned. . . . A society can be progressive only if it conserves its tradition." There's something for everybody there, which I dimly suspect may have been part of the problem to begin with.

...

American culture still has the resilience to contest the meretricious and the homogenized. To read the dust-jackets of most books, or to see the placards of most plays and films, is to have the impression that every production is as good as any other. For a long time, critics have put up with the abuse of their names, and the names of their publications, by hucksters and opportunists. Now, all of a sudden, there are signs of a resistance to this omnivorous flitting and puffing. It began, as far as I can discover, when a theatre critic (I think Frank Rich of the *New York Times*) sued a playhouse which had misused his name and his review. It wasn't that the theatre had selected only his complimentary sentences. It was that the management had filled the notice, which was an unequivocal condemnation, and had strung together words such as "tremendous", as in "with tremendous disgust", or "great" as in "great was my relief at the curtain's fall". (I paraphrase only slightly.)

Litigation is properly repulsive to those who live by writing, but the mangling of critics and reviewers has now reached a stage where it amounts to the stealing of good names as well as to a fraud on the public. Simon and Schuster, for example, is a supposedly serious publisher. It put out Shirley Conran's *Lace*, even so. That might be forgiven. What cannot be excused is the placing of a newspaper advertisement which quoted Jonathan Yardley of the *Washington Post* as saying "It soars". Yardley had written, rather heavily-handedly perhaps, that *Lace* "soars into the same stratosphere where you'll find *Valley of the Dolls*".

Harper and Row recently gave damages and an apology to Henry Mayer for editing and misappropriating 250 words of his critical review, in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, of a biography of Dorothy Day, Jessica Mitford, who was sent an advance copy of an aviation disaster book, wrote a blurb saying that she found it "totally absorbing". The publisher wrote back asking that she say instead "meticulously researched" (which I would say was her fault for writing "totally absorbing" in the first place). Ms Mitford still had the crust to write back to the publisher suggesting an all-purpose

check-list of permissible phrases for blurb-donors.

Publishers' Weekly, which has done a certain amount to forward this kind of protest, has drawn some useful examples into its correspondence columns. Walter Berkov, the literary editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, was surprised to see an advertisement in the *New York Times Book Review*, crediting his pages with the opinion that a potboiler on the Kennedy family was "definitive". No such word has ever appeared. It turned out on investigation that a luncheon, sponsored by the *Plain Dealer's* promotion department, had described the book as such on its menu. The offending publisher in this case was McGraw-Hill.

Enough. Relations between the review mill and the publishing industry are much too warm and rotten as it is. Two remedies suggest themselves. The first is that no reviewer should use any of the stale words or phrases ("stunning", "gripping", "absorbing", anything "totally" or "utterly") which lend themselves to cheap promotions. When Bertie Wooster was asked, by Ginger Winstrip, if he had read Florence Craye's *Spindrift* he replied, "Couldn't put down", cunningly not revealing that I hadn't been able to take it up. Authors and reviewers who care for standards should poise themselves above this kind of guile, should protest angrily when their work is poached and distorted, and should, when invited to contribute inexpensive trips to dust-jackets, send off a facsimile of the card which begins, "Mr Edmund Wilson regrets . . .".

...

I knew one or two things to the discredit of the Pulitzer Prize Committee before now (awards for fictitious newspaper articles; commendations for ludicrous novels; jobbery and mediocrity all around—the usual attendants of the prize-giving business). But I did not know until recently that publishers had to pay fees to enter their books or authors in this caucus race. The fee is only \$20 per title but Random House, for example, has 750 titles this year and some publishers have more. Thus, it is the publishing houses themselves who act, by buying the books which will be entered, as the first jury.

Roger Streus, President of Farrar, Straus, Giroux, is so far the only publisher to have objected publicly. Others feel, and say, that the Pulitzer stipulation is indefensible. But such is the mesmeric power of the prize that few dare to risk giving offence. When it is recalled that the Pulitzer Foundation was established as a tax-exempt concern, the practice of charging a fee for its consideration can be seen for what it is—a loading of the odds. Many of the very small presses simply cannot compete on these terms. And there seems to be an issue of principle here. As Farrar, Straus wrote to me:

What comes next? Will literary prizes in the U.S. become the sole property of well-budgeted books and publishers? And will other well-endowed foundations established to perpetuate and honour the name of wealthy donors take a lesson from the Pulitzer Foundation?

Frankly, I don't believe that the public has ever doubted that the answer to the second question is yes. But it is noteworthy, and commendable, that one publisher in a position to exploit the situation has decided instead to protest about it.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 204
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than January 4. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date.

Editorial, marked "Author," Author 204, on this envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX.

Earlier said earlier: the unrivaled band came
The apple withered in the palm.

1. The magnificently
Emerging from a cauldron, crest of water
That does itself up like a bearded wound
To place its pale as the silver alder
Upwards, glancing with careless arrogance
His thousand fables in the highest board
I come of France in the moonlit silence
Revealing the bare bones of things and fictions

To end up in a draughty lampit station
After the trains have gone
Competition No 200
Winner: W. H. Miller
Answer:
1 A land of streams some like a downward
2 A creature in the vapour.
3 A deep and gloomy breathing-place through which
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice.

William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 1850
3. The river comes pouring in above the sand
And crashes from the edge of the gorge
In a roll of spray and rainbow mist
William Carlos Williams, *Poems*

Letters

Freud and the Seduction Theory

Sir, — Jeffrey M. Masson (Letters, November 16) points out "two errors, both serious", in my review of his book *The Assault on Truth*. The first is to do with Ernest Jones's account of Freud's paedophilic dream. In my review I said that Freud's conviction of the reality of his own paedophilic impulses as manifested in a dream of sex play with his nine-year-old daughter, a dream that Jones misrepresents as being about Freud's niece Hella. This is what Freud says: "Not long ago I dreamt that I was feeling over-affectionately towards Mathilde, but her name was Hella." According to Masson, this is exactly what Jones says. This is what Jones says: "He had a dream about his American niece Hella which he had to interpret as covering a sexual wish towards his daughter."

If Masson thinks that what Jones says "is exactly what Freud says", then Masson has not exactly grasped the difference between the manifest and the latent content of a dream.

As part of a general case against the trustworthiness of Freud's later accounts of the seduction error, I called attention to the discrepancy between Freud's original remarks and those made in the 1914 "History of the Psychoanalytic Movement", in which Freud says, according to Strachey, that "patients ascribed their symptoms to passive sexual experiences in early childhood". Masson claims that "Freud never said anything like what Strachey translates". This is what Freud said: "Unter dem Einfluss der an Charcot anknapfenden traumatischen Theorie der Hysterie war man leicht geneigt, Berichte der Kranken für real und etiologisch bedeutsam zu halten, welche ihre Symptome auf passive sexuelle Erlebnisse in den ersten Kinderjahren, also grob ausgedrückt: auf Verführung zurückleiteten."

Let us suppose for the moment that Masson is right and that it is Freud, not the patients, who attribute their symptoms to passive sexual experiences. Since it is still the case that Freud has his patients reporting seductions in this passage, but in the earlier one says, "they have no feeling of recalling those scenes" and "assure me emphatically of their unbelief", what makes Masson think his emendation of Strachey has shown that "Freud was not saying anything misleading"?

But is Masson's emendation correct? Neither the Germanists nor the Germans I have consulted agree that "what Freud wrote is nothing like what Strachey translated". They found the sentence ambiguous; a view which has the advantage over Masson's that it at least renders it explicable why Strachey should have translated it as he did. But there is another consideration which sheds even more light on Strachey's version of the sentence (and also incidentally exposes the shabbiness of Masson's procedure). About half-a-dozen sentences along, in the same paragraph, Freud states unequivocally the view Strachey attributed to him: "hysterics trace their symptoms to fictitious traumas." Strachey probably resolved the ambiguity of the original sentence by reading into it the sense of the later. Why does Masson suppress mention of this later sentence? Whatever his reason, it is plain that he has not disposed of the contradiction to which I called attention.

But I wouldn't wish to leave the impression that the case against the reliability of Freud's accounts of the seduction episode rests on one quotation, however unequivocal. It rests, like a good psychoanalytic interpretation, on a wide range of data with varying degrees of agency. (I advanced some of these in a Radio Three talk, "Was Freud a Liar?", versions of which were published in the *Listener*, February 7, 1974, and in the *Journal of Orthomolecular Psychiatry*, Spring 1976.)

Masson also reproaches me for wantonly accusing Freud of bad faith. I cannot allow Masson to attempt to ingratiate himself with his former colleagues at my expense by coming forward as a champion of Freud's rectitude against my irresponsible slurs. As an example of Masson's own restraint in making accusations of bad faith consider his comment on Freud's seduction error, adding in the third

"His . . . patients were telling him the truth. The lies came from Freud" (p187). Masson's thesis that Freud willfully suppressed the fact that he was dealing with real seductions leaves his behaviour completely unmotivated. Whereas it is obvious why Freud would wish to conceal the extent to which he anticipated the seduction patients' "memories" and the discretion he employed in interpreting them.

Masson still insists on the relevance of his research into the extent of child abuse to Freud's seduction theory. In his book he finds it "puzzling" that Freud did not invoke the researches of Bernsd and Tardieu as "support for his new and unpopular theories". But were the seductively abused children who figured in the reports of Bernsd and Tardieu suffering from hysterical or obsessional symptoms? Were they amnesic for the sufferings they had undergone? (And I dislike and distrust the gratuitous circumstantiality with which Masson reports these horrors.) Since neither is the case, what bearing could they have on Freud's preoccupations?

Finally, Masson tells us that he has learned a lot of languages and done a lot of reading. But I never questioned his industriousness, only his understanding and his disinterestedness, and on neither point has his letter reassured me. FRANK CIOFFI, Department of Philosophy, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester.

Plato and Lesbianism

Sir, — I write again about Anacreon's poem on falling for a girl from Lesbos because two people have pointed out to me that their copies of the *Oxford Book of Greek Verse* (1930) had an emendation in the last line of the poem: it read not (as in the 1951 reprint that I know) "she gapes [erotically] for another [feminine]", which is the correct ancient reading, but "for another [masculine]", the difference of a single vowel. But since Higham and Quasimodo were both translating this adulterated text, I must withdraw my strictures on their work. However, the fact that modern scholars have been emending the text in this way does add weight to my contention that the poem is about a Lesbian in the modern sense as well as in the ancient sense (ie, simply a person from the island of Lesbos).

David Bain (Letters, November 23) agrees with my reading of the poem, but takes issue with me on one of the points made in my final incidental words. I mentioned the verb *Lesbiazo*, saying that it didn't mean doing what Lesbians now do, but what women "generously" did to men, having got the idea from research by women on women on Lesbos. The statement itself is plain enough (though Mr Bain gets technical about it), but it includes a bit of pop etymology which Mr Bain professes not to understand. It still seems to me, though, a not unilluminating attempt to explain a word by joining two commonplaces ("on Lesbos the women buzz buzz buzz" and "please lasbiata me"). After all, *lesbiazo* must have something to do with Lesbos. But, not being a scholar but a poet, I seem to have let my tongue run away with me.

ALISTAIR ELLIOT, 27 Hawthorn Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Cambodian History

Sir, — I was pleased that Ralph Smith should draw attention to one of the major purposes of my book, *Cambodia 1975-1982*, namely the demonstration of Cambodia's complexity. The memory of Cambodia's complexity, I felt, was his: his letter appears (October 26) in a book in which I am attempting to discover reached me here as I am attempting to discover through examination of the Tuol Sleng prison records to which the same generous access as in recent years is still being granted.

Anthony Barnett (September 14) was also correct in emphasizing the provocative tone of my book, which was deliberate and intended to force the reader to consider issues which have been obscured elsewhere.

Mr Smith is again correct in his criticism of Barnett's juxtaposition of David Chandler's sophisticated style with my polemics. Given the very different subject matter of our books, the contrast, even though true, is irrelevant. I do not agree with Smith, however, in his assessment of Chandler's book. Only the obsequiousness of Chandler's book, adding to the third

teenth century, but based on "predominantly French" research. For the period from the fifteenth century in the present day French historical writing on Cambodia has not been outstanding, and Chandler's chapters rely largely on his own research in Cambodian and Thai sources.

The Islamic king should have received mention, admittedly, but having read virtually all of the extant indigenous records for his reign, I feel confident in stating that very little other than speculation may be offered about its significance and that the problem there, as in all of the history of fourteenth to seventeenth-century Cambodia, is indeed inadequacy of sources and, in most pre-1970 scholarship, inadequate attention to those sources which are available.

MICHAEL VICKERY, Hotel Monorom, Phnom Penh.

McKim, Mead and White

Sir, — In his review of McKim, Mead and White, *Architects by Leland M. Roth* (November 23), Andrew Saint tells us that Louis Kahn "had the taste to die" in McKim's Pennsylvania Station "before it could be demolished". This is not so. The old Pennsylvania Station was demolished in 1963. Kahn died in 1974 in the new Penn Station, built over the bowels of McKim's original.

In a sense, Pennsylvania Station did not die in vain. The outrage following its demolition led New York City to adopt a Landmarks Preservation law in 1965, which will no doubt save a good many more McKim, Mead and White buildings from destruction.

Ironically, the new Penn Station is also the site of the fourth Madison Square Garden: White's famous palace of amusement, the second to bear that name, was demolished in 1925.

JAMES HEILBRUN, Fordham University, Bronx, NY 10458.

'This Real Night'

Sir, — I am a little surprised that Michael Sissons (Letters, November 23), unable to confirm or have his theory denied, should convince himself that Macmillan took fright at the 1,129 pages of a novel submitted by Rebecca West in 1956, and persuaded her to cut it almost exactly in half, publishing the first half as *The Fountain Overflows*, and offering her a contract for a trilogy.

I was the director responsible for general publishing at Macmillan at that time. Dame Rebecca was an old friend who had welcomed my joining Macmillan in 1939. She was then published by Cape, but had contracted with Macmillan for a short book in a travel series. This was to grow into *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941), a book of over 800 pages. So much for the charge of taking fright at length.

The Fountain Overflows was submitted under that title in 1956. This fact is easily ascertainable by reference to the Macmillan Manuscript Registry and the Letter-Books of the period, presumably both available in the Macmillan Archives in the British Library. Dame Rebecca told both Ben Heubach of Viking and me that a second novel was in nearly complete form, but could not be published at that time for family reasons. She and I were to return to this subject many times in the next ten years. It was she, not her publishers, who was responsible for the long delay in the publication of *This Real Night*. My conclusion long ago was that she did not want anyone to see a work with which she was not satisfied, and her own critical judgment, not family reasons, explains a misgiving which Patricia Craig's review in this same number would seem to justify.

LOVAT DICKSON, Apartment 808, 21 Dale Avenue, Toronto, Canada.

Library Services

Sir, — With regard to the standard of service offered by the British Library, it is said that if Karl Marx had been provided with all the books that he ordered, *Das Kapital* would have been a very different book. Shortcomings in the services offered by the Bibliothèque Nationale seem trivial by comparison.

DAVID BLOW, 12 Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1.

The Oxford Authors

Sir, — I am glad to learn from Frank Kermode's letter (November 16) that the Oxford Authors will eventually include more than the five already published and the fifteen or so in prospect.

I cannot agree with Nicolas Walter (Letters, November 30) that *Gulliver's Travels* does not need explanatory notes, though I agree they should not be obtrusive. I do not understand why he was astonished by my saying that, apart from *Gulliver*, "Swift was mainly a pamphleteer and most of his writings in prose and verse were written to serve an immediate purpose; except to the historian, his subjects are no longer of importance." Mr Walter objects, citing the *Modest Proposal*. I agree about that, and I would also cite the *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*. But taken together these tracts occupy only about eighteen pages of the Oxford Authors text (out of 604). And even they may require elucidation by reference to their context of origin. Mr Walter says that a live broadcast of the *Modest Proposal* on Irish television had to be stopped because of the reactions of the studio audience. I do not know the details of this incident, but perhaps the audience misunderstood the purpose of the work. A brief historical introduction might have helped them.

W.W. ROBSON, Department of English Literature, University of Edinburgh, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh.

Sir, — As one of the editors of the *Swift* volume in the new Oxford Authors series, perhaps I may be able to provide Nicolas Walter with some of the "proper guidance" which he says (Letters, November 30) potential purchasers, at least of this volume, need. His letter contains the second adverse comment in your pages on the omission of *Gulliver's Travels* from the Oxford Authors volume, and like W.W. Robson's review (October 26) lacks any serious mention of the reason for this, namely, the volume's actual scope and content.

Both Mr Walter and Professor Robson compare the Oxford Authors selection unfavourably with John Heyward's *Nonesuch Swift* volume, published half a century ago. The *Nonesuch* accommodates the one hundred and fifty thousand words of *Gulliver's Travels* by cutting Swift's companion masterpiece, *A Tale of a Tub*, to four of the Digressions and three other snippets; by similarly eviscerating *The Conduct of the Allies*, even though the editor himself declares that, "whether judged on its own merit, or by the profound effect it produced on public opinion, [it] is probably the most famous political pamphlet in the English language"; by including only fifteen poems; and by a "more regrettable omission", that of the Bickerstaff papers. The scanty representation of Swift's writing forced by allowing more than a third of the space to the *Travels*, now freely available at very little cost, is hardly compensated for by placing among its twenty prose pieces two works not by Swift. All other selections in print similarly imprison Swift in the pages left after including the *Travels*. Is he to be condemned to this treatment in perpetuity?

Among its more than sixty titles, the Oxford Authors *Swift* includes *A Tale of a Tub* and its accompanying pieces complete. It contains *The Conduct of the Allies* complete, in the belief that some readers may like to know something of historical events as they actually happened and were argued over; it also offers thirty poems. It provides a substantial representation of Swift's Irish pieces, and in addition fifteen of his incomparable letters. The "dignified austerity" of the *Nonesuch* volume is attractive, but it also entails some disadvantages. No help is given to the enquiring reader who may not be disposed to believe Heyward's reiterated opinions, apparently also the source of Robson's views, about what is "no longer of general interest" or "no longer important except to the historian".

ANGUS ROSS, School of English and American Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.

The author of "Ambivalence and Dedication", referred to by Christopher Driver in his review of Callim and Arden's *The Incorporated Wife* (November 4), is Linda Stainton.

so much so that critics tend to describe their motives and actions—wrongly, it seems to me—in terms of modern psychology.

The interesting question here is why Martorell should have wanted to make Tirant into a more complex character and how he actually achieves this. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Tirant is that he is a hero conceived on a human scale, one who at various points is made to acknowledge his human limitations. It is this "humanizing" which contrasts most strongly with earlier romance: a difference which is relatively easy to convey at the public level but which has much deeper consequences in the context of love. In terms of chivalry, of course, there is no incompatibility between love and war: what Martorell shows, however, is what in the novels of chivalry usually remains implicit: the connection between the battlefield and the bedroom, and the literal side of the love-war metaphor. This accounts for a number of scenes which can only be described as sexual farce, as when Carmesina's lady-in-waiting, Pleasure-of-my-life, nannies to get Tirant into the bed where Carmesina is asleep: Tirant's head was on his lady's belly, and Pleasure-

of-my-life's was on his head. When she saw her mistress dozing off, she relaxed her grip and Tirant fell where he liked, but when the princess moved, Pleasure-of-my-life gripped his head and he kept still. This game lasted for more than an hour. To overlook such passages, or to play them down, would be to give a one-sided account of the novel. When one reads them in their context, one finds that as a rule they are very carefully placed: this particular episode comes just before Tirant's career reaches one of its lowest points; at this stage, there is a strong suspicion that Tirant's love for Carmesina is making him neglect his military duties, and at the end of the scene he is surprised and breaks his leg in escaping from the palace. And the final insult to his pride comes when his friends hear him crying out in pain and mistake his voice for a woman's.

Nevertheless, despite what seems an unusual degree of sexual frankness, Tirant and Carmesina do not actually consummate their love until almost the end of the novel, and the way this suspense is achieved tells us a good deal about Martorell's intentions. It is clear that the two main characters are passionately in love with one another from an early stage. It

is also true that Carmesina from time to time encourages Tirant, only to draw back at the last moment; yet to describe her behaviour as "coquettish", as critics have sometimes done, seems wrong: on the one hand, it mistakes the nature of Martorell's desire for verisimilitude, and on the other, it imports too "modern" a view of character and motivation. In practice, the two points are connected: though he is concerned to make the action as plausible as possible, Martorell is never an "omniscient narrator" in the sense of an analyst of what is going on in the minds of his characters. All through the novel, in fact, characterization hardly seems to be assisted either by direct self-revelation or by authorial intervention. What does assist it—and this is surely one of the great triumphs of the *Tirant*—is Martorell's skill in exploiting less direct forms of disclosure: dream narrations, actions and gestures, and certain less formal kinds of discourse.

The effect of this is to create an illusion of depth without actually entering into the minds of the characters. Often this is achieved by suggesting conflicting motives: the tension between duty and desire, and also the suspicion that certain lies may have a basis in truth. Moreover, at several points in the book Martorell makes one of his characters tell a "story" which goes beyond the strict needs of the situation. Thus in the "secret marriages" episode, Pleasure-of-my-life secretly witnesses the love-making of the two couples and later recounts what she has seen in the form of a "dream". Not only this, she describes her own reactions: she was so literally "inflamed" by what she saw and heard, she says, that she had to pour cold water over herself and later was unable to sleep for thinking of what she had witnessed. Clearly, Pleasure-of-my-life's involvement adds to the erotic atmosphere of the incident and there is a strong suggestion that her voyeurism and her interest in arranging other people's affairs represent a kind of loving by proxy. However, one cannot be sure of this: the forces at work include not only her description of her immediate feelings, but also the whole set of emotions which lies behind her desire to tell all this to the lovers.

In such instances, Martorell's technique is to create a shadowy area of meaning in which a particular character—more often than not, Tirant himself—comes to seem less certain and possibly more complex. This raises the question of consistency: in what sense, if at all, are Tirant and Carmesina consistent characters, and, if they are, what are the implications for the novel as a whole? And here one comes back to the comment from *Don Quixote* quoted earlier. This goes on:

For all that, I tell you that the man who composed it [the *Tirant lo Blanc*] deserved to be sent to the galleys for the rest of his life, because he did not perpetrate all these absurdities in a calculated manner.

Cervantes's point, that is to say, is criticizing Martorell for not knowing what he was doing, for writing without clarity of purpose. Yet what this comment ultimately reveals, surely, is the gap which separates medieval and Renaissance conceptions of verisimilitude. Though he is the greater artist, there is no doubt that Cervantes's sense of decorum—of what can be convincingly represented in fiction—is narrower than Martorell's. This is where it can be misleading to praise the *Tirant* for its "modernity", as recent critics tend to do; though, on the sur-

face, Martorell's technique often seems surprisingly modern, and though one is inclined to use modern critical concepts to describe its effects, it is also clear that Martorell is a man of his times, and that the kind of things which offended Cervantes would scarcely have surprised a fifteenth-century reader. One could argue, in fact, that it is possible to regard Tirant as a consistent character precisely because Martorell has been so careful to place his moments of sexual comedy in relation to the whole. And if anything surprised a fifteenth-century audience, it would probably have been the inclusive nature of this whole, rather than any dissonance between its parts.

This is where the problem of characterization impinges on the whole question of Martorell's intentions in writing the *Tirant*. Though independent evidence is hard to come by, it seems likely that in describing the court of Constantinople, Martorell is really re-creating his own society at a time when certain aspects of contemporary culture were coming to meet his imagination half-way. We know, for instance, that in fifteenth-century Spain, as in other European countries at the time, there was a revival both of troubadour poetry and of the ideals of chivalry. Though recent scholars tend to regard this whole movement as a form of archaism or at best a way of concealing insoluble contradictions between social theory and social reality, it is possible to see the *Tirant* as a sedulous attempt to imagine the kind of resolution which such a situation would require. One thing at least seems certain: Martorell wishes not to disparage the ideals of chivalry, only to explore their relation to the world he knows, and the whole thrust of his temperament, one may feel, leads him to re-invent this world in order to demonstrate the imaginative truth of chivalry to a society whose values are becoming progressively less socratic. Thus, however much he demythifies the courtly ethos by admitting that in real life people often behave in a quite uncourtly way, he assumes that the myths themselves still have the strength to serve as official models of behaviour. There is nothing subversive about his burlesque effects, nor, for the most part, any note of censure—simply a good-humoured recognition of the part played by animal spirits in human affairs. Similarly, his way of regarding the chivalry to which he was temperamentally attached involves neither nostalgia nor iconoclasm, but rather a brilliantly imaginative attempt to bridge the widening gap between the chivalresque code and the realities of social practice. More striking still, there is nothing openly didactic about this attempt: what resolution there is lies in the unity of the fiction itself and in the comprehensiveness of the perspective which this embodies.

It goes without saying that none of these perspectives is the "right" one, and it is surely one of the achievements of the *Tirant* that, like other great novels, it draws its readers into an endlessly ramifying process of discrimination. Coming two years after Pamela Valery's excellent version of *Curtal I Gelfa* (TLS, February 25, 1983), the other major Catalan contribution to the chivalresque romance, this first English translation of the *Tirant* is doubly welcome, both as a fascinating piece of storytelling in itself and as further evidence of a rich and genuinely European culture whose best productions have lost none of their original power.

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of December 13, 1934, carried a review of Vienna by Stephen Spender. Mr. Spender's new long poem is an attempt to cope imaginatively with political events. He has been moved, it seems, to a mixture of anger and pity (and in conclusion) universal affection by the suppression of the Austrian Socialists by Dollfus in February. His technical difficulties are the obvious ones: the statement of political questions, as—

Rem, rats, gas, the price of electricity
They loaded with taxes, (the publicly blamed tax)
And at the same time beamed out, deftly, the news
papers.

The defect here is not, as might too easily be objected, the choice of "intriguing" material. It is rather a purely representational tendency to which Mr. Spender at intervals succumbs. The passage above is in fact a pondered, the artistic equivalent is a rather

selected.

Mr. Spender's own position in the matter is hardly lucid. An apparent identification of himself with the Viennese workers arouses a faint scepticism in the mind of the reader, especially when it might seem that Mr. Spender is among the imprisoned, watching a leader's execution. We are led, on the whole, not only to pity for these Socialists, but also to a view of the poet himself in the act of being pitied: this poem reveals that Mr. Spender's charm is rather passive; the readiness of his sympathetic response, which was very refreshing in a dry period, is also his danger. His occasional critical excess makes him a notable romantic. His too great sensibility of the sympathetic kind has been observed, "is even adverse to the higher kind of conduct that seeks to relieve pain and to promote happiness. And what would seem to be a somewhat trivial, to this man

A sense of community

M. T. Clanchy

SIRAN REYNOLDS
Kingdoms and Communitas in Western Europe, 900-1300
207pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £28.
019219555

This is a challenging book which all historians of medieval Europe and social theorists will have to come to terms with. Its argument is that the bonds of medieval society were horizontal rather than vertical. Feudalism is dismissed as a meaningless term, alien to the Middle Ages. Instead of the hierarchy of lord, vassal and knight, Susan Reynolds emphasizes the ties of community which united people of disparate status into groups for mutual cooperation. Such collectivities had many names: communes, companies, consortia, estates, fraternities, guilds and others. She argues that such names had little significance in themselves and were not mutually exclusive. Communes and guilds for example did not exist solely in towns and still less were they restricted to the cities of "progressive" areas, like Flanders and Lombardy, where bourgeois capitalism first, according to classical Marxist theory, developed.

Communities are described at each level of social organization to a series of chapters, starting at the bottom with "the community of the parish" and moving through "villages and rural neighbourhoods", "urban communities" and "provinces and lordships" up to "the community of the realm" at the top. As communal activity was a fundamental commonplace of

medieval society, an individual might participate in a number of communities at different levels at the same time. The sense of community was not the monopoly of any particular class or region. Each chapter draws its examples from England, France, Germany and Italy in order to emphasize the similarities in social and political organization across Western Europe. The idea of the community of the realm was not something specially English, as parliamentary historians have often assumed; neither was the civic community Italian, nor elective kingship German, nor the three estates French. Such assumptions were made, Dr Reynolds argues, because nationalist historians of the nineteenth century in particular wanted to think that their own medieval records were unique.

A glance at Stubbs's *Charters* confirms this: in the edition of 1895 he deliberately got rid of expressions "which belong more properly to French and German history". Students at Oxford, who were being nurtured to propagate British rule, must not come away with the subversive idea that the nations of Europe had once shared common institutions and values. Reynolds by contrast aims at a truly European history. She has read widely in French, German and Italian and her excellent bibliography and footnotes are an achievement in themselves. She is aware that even her wide range may be too narrow. Why exclude the Iberian kingdoms from Western Europe? In the history of medieval communities is there really anything special about England, France, Germany and Italy? All Latin Christendom should be considered and perhaps Greek and Slav Christendom as well. Within the British Isles

Dark deeds in the twilight

Caroline Bingham

RONALD WILLIAMS
The Lords of the Isles: The Clan Donald and the early Kingdom of the Scots
Thos. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
312 pp.
019122684

Romance is in the eye of the beholder, and Ronald Williams sees romance in the history of the Lordship of the Isles. He sees tragedy in the later history of the Western Highlands and Isles, deprived of the leadership of the chiefs of Clan Donald. Having expressed contempt for the artificial view of the Highlands which characterized the Celtic Revival of the early nineteenth century, he goes on to evoke his own vision of the past in terms which owe much to his inspiration:

Romantic sentiment suffuses the stark tragedy. The darkness in their eagle plumes dark. The Gaelic battle banners dip and fall, and ghostly captains lead their swordsmen back into the western mist. The coloured glads melt slowly into the autumn heather; the music of the pipes dies on the wind; and they have returned to that old world of Celtic twilight to which they first belonged.

In that old world some extremely unpleasant events took place. The opening chapters of Williams's book relate the earlier history of the Western Highlands and Isles, from the foundation of the Scottish Kingdom of Dal Riata in about 500 to the emergence of the Lordship of the Isles shortly after 1350. This section includes an account of the Norse occupation of the Western Isles and an entirely unnecessary chapter on the battle of Clontarf, fought in Ireland in 1014, which concludes with an implausible description of the brains of the High King Brian Boru dripping from his slayer's sword, and his subsequent execution of the latter by slow disembowelling. During the later years of Norwegian supremacy in the Isles (which were ceded to Scotland in 1266), King Magnus, Earl of Ross, invaded the Isles in 1261 and King Hakon of Norway was told that the Scots had taken the little children and had them on their spear-points, and shook their heads until they brought the children down to their hands, and so threw them away dead.

After the establishment of the Lordship of the Isles the high level of violence continued. In 1449 the army of Donald, second Lord of the Isles, burned Inverness on route to the battle of Inverlochy. In 1457 the third Lord, Alexander, burned Inverness again; and in 1491 Alexander of Lochalsh, nephew of the fourth Lord, sacked Inverness "from force of habit", and went on to set fire to a church and burn alive the people who had crowded into it for sanctuary. The Lordship of the Isles was forfeited to the Scottish Crown two years later. In the twentieth century, when communities are destroyed and when people are tortured and massacred, the events are reported to their undisguised horror, and nobody supposes the perpetrators to be heroic warriors. Atrocities were equally horrific in the medieval centuries, and "Celtic twilight" cannot be permitted to shroud them in spurious romance.

Far more interesting than the catalogue of slaughter which the history of the Lordship of the Isles can easily become is the history of the learned and artistic professions which managed to flourish under its aegis. At least the Lordship provided a political focus for Gaelic civilization, and the Lords and their immediate ancestors gave personal patronage to its intellectuals, artists and craftsmen. The learned society of Gaelic was highly professionalized on a hereditary basis: both learning and position were passed on to certain families. There were dynasties of judges, doctors, historians, scribes and genealogists. The same system applied in arts and crafts: there were dynasties of musicians (the harp remained the favoured instrument of the Gael until the sixteenth century), of poets, sculptors, armourers and shipbuilders. Gaelic learning and art survived the fall of the Lordship of the Isles, living on throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some branches of learning, notably medicine, declined as a result of extreme traditionalism, and not as a result of the failure of political support. Poetry, on the other hand, flourished until the late eighteenth century, continuing to flourish during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and drawing inspiration from the unhappy events of the Jacobite period.

Ronald Williams has written a clear account of the century and a half of the Lordship's existence, and he is remarkably lucid on the complex relationships within the Clan Donald. It is a pity that he gives so much more space to warrior than to scholars, artists and poets, because the history of the Lordship of the Isles suggests that there is little cause to lament the passage of this heroic society and much cause to regret the decline of the learned society. This history is not romantic, and its materials could provide much more than a superficial narrative of feudal and warfare.

the book can similarly be criticized for saying little about Welsh or Irish communities, although Scotland is considered in the context of the Declaration of Arbroath.

To such criticisms Reynolds replies that her knowledge, including linguistic knowledge, is already stretched thin enough. A great strength of her work is that it is based on first-hand knowledge. She judges things for herself and she has a refreshing, jargon-free, way of writing. She has often read the medieval Latin source, as well as the modern literature concerning it. No one scholar could have done the same for the sources in a dozen other languages, which a comprehensive range would have required. As it is, the exposition sometimes suffers from being too concise, where the ramifications of evidence cannot be discussed. The book's wide range also raises a doubt as to whether the types of collective organization it describes are distinctive to medieval Europe. The final statement, that the object of government was "to achieve a harmonious consensus in accordance with the custom and law of the whole community" applies equally to almost any "traditional" society.

Reynolds's approach is like that of a social anthropologist. She distrusts the received wisdom of the colonial officials (in the medieval field these are the clerics and academics learned in canon and Roman law) and searches instead for the testimony of the people themselves. This explains her emphasis on lay society and on secular, as opposed to ecclesiastical, records. There are pitfalls in ecdothology here, as the medieval distinction between cler-

Seriously fortified

B. K. Davison

DAVID J. CATHCART KING
Castellarium Anglicaum: An index and bibliography of the castles in England, Wales and the Islands
Volume 1, Anglesey-Montgomery; Volume 2, Norfolk-Yorkshire and the Islands
376pp. New York: Kraus, \$150 the set.
052750107

Ruined castles are perhaps the most evocative of all the vestiges of our past. It is David J. Cathcart King's achievement to have identified and briefly described this debris of a bygone age. Within these two volumes he has "captured" the castles of England and Wales.

This capture-by-catalogue is in the best tradition of British antiquarian topography. Counting castles goes back to the ages which produced them. In the early thirteenth century Gervase of Canterbury listed ninety-one; three centuries later, John Leland noted 450; by 1795 James Moore was able to refer to 530. The numbers rose, even as the castles themselves were razed. Now it seems likely that King has caught all, or virtually all, those which have survived until the late twentieth century.

It is not just the major castles which are noticed here, but every grassy hump likely to have once been a castle. King defines a castle as "a building of the Middle Ages (in England and Wales at least) which is seriously fortified". On this basis, he lists the major stone castles, the peel towers of Northern England, the fortified farmhouses known as "bastles" (in Cumberland and Northumberland only), town walls and fortified monasteries, as well as grass-grown earthworks. His *Castellarium* is thus a catalogue of medieval and early sixteenth-century fortification. The one category missing is the walled cathedral close. This is a pity, since closes were the symbolic castles of religious communities and as such often consciously adopted the style of "real" castles belonging to secular communities.

The catalogue, which runs to 553 pages, is grouped by county, and covers extant, vanished and possible fortified constructions; works inspected, but rejected as castles, are also noted. This entries are necessarily brief—just the name, location, history as recorded in contemporary sources, a few words of description and a bibliography. Thus, the Tower of London receives 280 words of description and thirty-two bibliographical references, whereas the small earthwork at Whittington has to

ic and lay was itself an artificial construct and most records, whether ecclesiastical or lay, were written by clerics. Reynolds is like an anthropologist in a "traditional" society too in finding little evidence of any fundamental change of values over time. There were more people and many more documents by 1300, but the kinds of collective activity they described were not so different from those in 900. The Londoners of the early tenth century, for example, formed a guild of both nobles and non-nobles to keep the peace and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries similarly they had a commune. There was no progression from the primitive to the modern in social or legal thinking: "by 1300 there are hints of novelty, but no more".

This conclusion is intended to be contentious. There was nothing novel about the spirit of association, Reynolds asserts, and no new concept of the commune. She is aware that this contradicts Guibert de Nogent and other medieval evidence. He had described "commune" as a "new and wicked word" in his account of the rising by the burghers at Laon against the bishop in 1112. Reynolds replies that Guibert was exaggerating and that such clerical descriptions of dangerous novelties should not be accepted at their face value. This is consistent with her axiom that lay ideas can never be reliably studied through lay records. Nevertheless those who disagree will return to Guibert and many other problematic pieces of evidence. But all students of the Middle Ages and of collective organization will be indebted to Reynolds for this rich and original book. It will be the starting-point for discussion and the reference point for information.

make do with ten words and a single reference. Such relentless brevity on occasion robs us of helpful, if subjective, detail. Thus, Castell Coch in Glamorgan was "much rebuilt in the 19th century". There is no indication that Burges's work for the Marquis of Bute made it one of the most romantic evocations of the Middle Ages to be found in Britain—a miniature Carcassonne. This is not, however, really a book for the intending visitor; rather it is an encyclopedic work of reference.

One purpose of any such work of reference must be to serve as a basis for constructive analysis. So what does King make of it all? His forty-five pages of introduction reveal a western view—from "Little England beyond Wales". Welsh castles were King's first love and for the most part these were strictly military works, whether built by the Welsh or the English. Nevertheless, as he himself points out, castles are linked with lordship. Baronies with a high level of sub-feudation had many lordships, and therefore many castles. The distribution of the castles thus reflects the patterns of tenancy as much as those of warfare.

King has no time for symbolism or conspicuous consumption as a motive for castle building, nor for the all-embracing domestic role of the castle. His military viewpoint, however, is difficult to sustain in many parts of lowland England. He could, perhaps have emulated more Mark Grouard's analysis of the Great House as a power-generating machine—the castle being merely the medieval faces of the Great House, fortified because society was largely held together by military links. Small, cut-rate, non-residential forts may have outnumbered the fortified mansions of the gentry, but they were marginal, even in the Middle Ages. It is because castles were homes, administrative centres, banks, courts and gaols, as well as being forts, that they were so important.

David King's *Castellarium* is the result of a lifetime's dedication. Sadly, it may well be the last of its kind. In future, such catalogues are more likely to be found on magnetic tape than between hard covers. But it is a measure of the usefulness of these two volumes that one's immediate desire is to take scissors to them and to make patterns other than those imposed by modern (or even ancient) county boundaries. At \$150, the *Castellarium* is too costly to treat in this way. Even at this price, however, no library with any pretensions to serving those concerned with castles should be without it.

one to bring it up the nd his hat "it iny of ", his is not o and ion as aside enua-criti-com-t the ham-what rent, and if it nted a his ther is n the vint- of is in osi-sub-t in e." of and phy om oyd ise vn-lis-en, in an an-ja-s." nd ces tis-of ing ja-not he is my om sha-er, the (t it vey seen he ald-"r ais-ban the of

149 141 130 126

Definite and indefinite

Stephen Bann

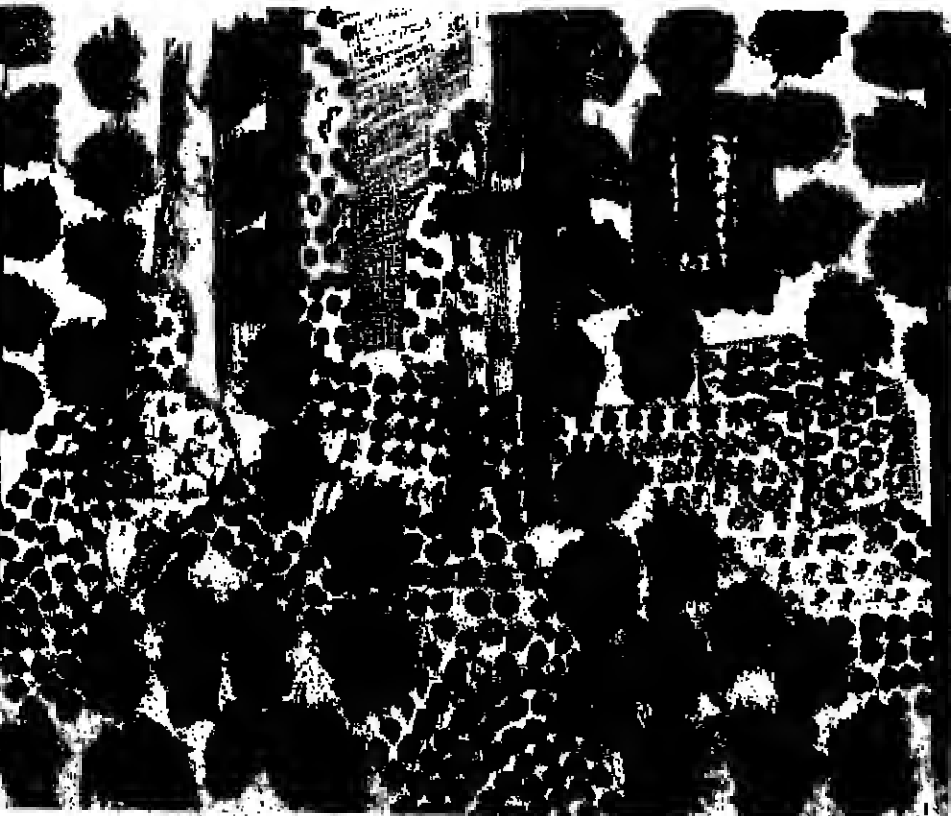
HUBERT DAMISCH
Fenêtre jaune cadimur: Ou les dessous de la peinture
320pp. Paris: Seuil. 99fr.
202069628

The fact that the work of Hubert Damisch is virtually unknown in Britain is not the least telling indication of the cleavage between British and French conceptions of art theory. Damisch's principal work to date, the enigmatically named *Théorie du nuage*, was published as long ago as 1972 and still awaits translation. Yet no study of our period has more suggestively demonstrated the way in which a consistently tested theory of representation can illuminate the whole historical development of Western painting since the Renaissance. Damisch's approach in this *tour de force* of sustained argument is perhaps best understood in relation to the no less interesting procedure of the maverick of French art history in the previous generation, Pierre Francastel. For Francastel, who published *La Figure et le lieu* in 1967, the perspectival space of Renaissance painting was essentially heterogeneous: one could search it diligently for sociological data, and note the appearance of theatrical machines deriving from medieval street theatre, as well as identifying the "new objects" through which masters like Uccello conveyed their joyful mastery of the science of perspective.

For Damisch, by contrast, the wager was precisely to show how the rigidly defined system of perspective summoned up its own "counter-subject" or "counterweight" in the indefinable figure of the cloud. In the notorious models with which Brunelleschi inaugurated the systematic study of perspective, it was the sky which eluded and exceeded the methodical recession of Florentine architecture. Damisch's intuition was to realize that this conflict could be analysed as a force of dynamic transformation: Correggio's gleaming of the lateral space of a cupola to show the vision of St John on Patmos, a host of cloudy Assumptions painted by Zurbarán and Murillo, and even the difficulties of Ruskin in coming to terms with the "Truth of Clouds", could all be shown to belong within the same régime of representing a space as both finite and infinite. Damisch shrewdly contrasts this tradition with the practice of the Chinese artist, which is to reconcile all opposites (including that of Earth and Sky) through "the unique trace of

the brush".

Damisch promises us more material on the "origin of perspective" in a forthcoming study. His *Fenêtre jaune cadimur* presents a very different side of his work in art history and theory which is, at the same time, strictly complementary to the studies of the Renaissance heritage. In effect, he has amassed in one volume a large number of occasional reviews and articles which demonstrate the point of arrival, in twentieth-century art, of the fractured space of the Renaissance and Baroque masters. It is quite a tribute to the clarity and consistency of Damisch's thinking that a collection of this kind, some of which dates back as far as the 1950s, can be reconciled harmoniously with the general argument of *Théorie du nuage*: that modern painters as apparently diverse as Duchamp, Mondrian, Pollock and Dubuffet can be assessed in the light of a theory which is not only generally applicable, but turns out to have a highly specific reference to their individual practices. Damisch makes



Howard Hodgkin's screenprint "Souvenir", 1981, reproduced from the catalogue to The British Art Show: Old allegiances and new directions 1979-1984 (142pp. Orbis. £15; paperback, 1995. 0856137944). The exhibition can be seen at the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery until December 22, at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, from January 19 to February 24, and subsequently in Sheffield and Southampton.

Among the disenchanting

Carter Ratcliff

SUZI GABLIK
Has Modernism Failed?
133pp. Thames and Hudson. £10.
0502233918

Suzi Gablik believes that it is no longer enough for art critics to keep track of winners and losers in the style wars of the international art world. Nor is there any point in joining up with this or that band of ideologues. The art critic must ascend to the high ground of the "cultural critic". Only from that elevated vantage point is it possible to see what the situation requires: "a fundamental reconstruction of the basic premises of our whole culture". *Has Modernism Failed?* returns over and over again to a plea that we tackle the task of cultural rebuilding before it is too late.

For Gablik, the question in the title of her book has an obvious answer. Modernism has indeed failed, miserably so. Each of the book's eight chapters elaborates her vision of this failure and its causes: alienated individuality, on the one hand, and bureaucratic oppression, on the other, with the effects of both made worse by marketplace greed. She sets out to cover the same ground eight times, and before long the familiarity of her themes joins with the urgency of her feelings to turn her argument into a high-minded tirade. Though she modifies her tone by quoting Max Weber on bureaucracy, Alasdair MacIntyre on ethics, Emil Durkheim on the primacy of the collective, and a

variety of others on all the expected topics, Gablik's own voice emerges clearly. This testimonial fervour gives her book its value. *Has Modernism Failed?* adds little to our compendium of complaints about personal detachment and corporate manipulation. As a cry from the depths of an art world Gablik has reason to believe is a wilderness, her litany is persuasive. In fact there is much in the current scene to wound a responsible sensibility.

Though Gablik is best known for her art criticism, she has also established herself as an artist. As an insider, she has first-hand experience of the "mutant intentions" behind the crowd-pleasing policies of contemporary art galleries and museums. She has seen from close up how artists, "hooked" on "bureaucratic artificiality", sink to the condition of compliant functionaries. Mutated, unnatural, deluded by ideologies of the autonomous self, tranquillized by affluence, incapable of moral distinctions, its ideals fallen in ruin, soulless, dead to God or even the faintest flicker of the numinous, dead itself, this is the art world as Gablik sees it. Brought down to the scale of the pathologically autonomous individual, this long indictment also serves as her portrait of the latter-day artist.

Art, once supposed "eternal truths which transcend individual existence". Now "the assembly-line mentality that characterizes so much current art-making" no longer presents a significant alternative to bourgeois values. Gablik finds exceptions in the present and in the avant-garde's heroic past, but they lead her into muddle. At one moment she praises the

no claim for the absolute validity of a method which offers us (as the book-cover modestly assures us) one way of traversing the territory of modern painting, among others. But his study is worth a good deal more than a mere collection of sensitive observations on the achievements of Modernism, precisely because it retains its basis in that earlier and historically determining Modern Movement, the Renaissance.

One of the major essays in the collection stands a little apart, however, both because of its material and because it is one of the very few examples of Damisch's work which has been translated into English (in *20th Century Studies*, December 1976). In devoting the whole of forty pages to one modern painting, Paul Klee's "Equals Infinity" (1932), Damisch sets a new standard of seriousness for the analysis of an art whose very charm and playfulness have perhaps inhibited more intellectual speculation: not only does he show convincingly that Klee's reference to "Infinity" betokens a fami-

liarity with the use of the concept by modern mathematicians like Cantor, but he also argues that Klee is offering us an equivalent in plastic terms for the new cosmological vision—a representation of "points" in space which deliberately evokes and repudiates Albert Einstein's with its unique "vanishing point".

Beside this formidable piece of analysis, most of the other essays in the collection are comparatively slight. But their particular interest lies in the way Damisch is able to override the tired distinction between "abstract" and "figurative" painting which is, even now, acquiring new and unexpected currency. For Damisch, such a superficial distinction is, and has always been since the Renaissance, subject to a more basic antinomy between linearity—the very precondition of perspectival space—and the various principles which contest and override linearity: the cloud in Renaissance and Baroque painting, the effect of colour exceeding the boundaries set by line in more recent work. Yet this antinomy between the defined and the indefinable finds its own equilibrium, so to speak, in a figure which recalls Gottfried Semper's view of the origin of all art in the practice of weaving. It is through the interlacing effect—the *entrelac*—of the woven textile that Damisch is able to identify a structure characteristic of much of the most influential contemporary painting, from Mondrian's grid structures and Albers's "bands of colour" seeming to pass under each other, to Pollock's triumphant transcendence of linearity through an excess of interlacing tracks.

This decisive contemporary phenomenon, which Damisch traces to a recent manifestation in the fascinating work of the French painter François Rouan, must of course have its roots in the nineteenth century. Indeed it is not difficult to see that Cézanne would be a crucial point of reference for anyone who wished to assert the victory of the *entrelac* over traditional conceptions of draughtsmanship and perspectival space. Damisch has hit upon a most original way of characterizing Cézanne's new approach, which is to begin his book with a lengthy and absorbing discussion of Balzac's *Le Chef-d'oeuvre Inconnu*. In Balzac's perceptive evocation of the painter Frenhofer's concealed masterpiece, whose very "indefinability" is its mark of divergence from previous painterly practice, Damisch discerns a kind of allegory of the destiny of modern painting. Did not Cézanne exclaim to Emile Bernard (as Damisch legitimately reminds us): "Frenhofer, c'est moi!"?

Her Manichaeanism has its uses. For one thing, it generates enough energy to sustain her feelings of outrage. For another, it provides sufficient hope to rescue her from a convincingly bleak view of the current outlook for art. Villains are simply villainous and the good are unalloyed. Praise the latter and one is uplifted, but sometimes mistaken as well. Gablik accepts Norman Mailer's claim that the graffiti painters of the New York subway have launched "a tribal rebellion against an evil industrial civilization". Then she backs off at the sight of graffiti drawn into the gallery system. Nothing qualifies her: approval of Joseph Beuys.

Gablik and many others believe that Beuys must be treasured for "reintroducing the artist in his role as shaman—a mystical, priestly, political figure in prehistoric cultures". He stands at the entrance to a spiritually renovated future. I doubt this. It seems more likely that Beuys takes his place at the end of a long line of primitivists whose ancestral head is not the tribal shaman but Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose appeals to a fictitious prehistory did so much to promote the individualism which Beuys, whose own egoism is overdone, cultivates the image of an apocryphal dandy. Gablik sees him otherwise. "Potentially we are enchanted," she writes, "the world was enchanted." She is ready to follow without question Beuys or any other artist who promises to bring back the enchantment. This is the author's book finally takes from the present to the present to a pastoral dream of art as the way to "mythic and sacramental vision".

Daniel C. Dennett

With many different people claiming to be explaining the mind in "computational" terms, and almost as many denying that this is possible, empirical research and ideological combat are currently proceeding on many fronts, and it is not easy to get one's bearings. But some themes are emerging from the cacophony, and they tempt me to try to sketch the logical geography of some of the best-known views, with an eye to diminishing the disagreements and misrepresentations that sometimes attend them.

There are still dualists and other mystics in the world who assert (and hope and pray, apparently) that the mind will forever elude science, but they are off the map for me, and I take it as agreed by all parties to the discussion that what we want, in the end, is a materialistic theory of the mind as the brain. Our departure point is the mind, meaning roughly the set of phenomena that is characterized in everyday terms—the terms of "folk psychology"—as *thinking about* this and that, *having beliefs about* this and that, *perceiving* this and that, *so forth*. Our destination is the brain, meaning roughly the set of cerebral phenomena that is characterized in the non-intentional, non-symbolic, non-information-theoretic terms of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology.

Or we can switch destination with departure, and construe the task as building from what is known of the plumbing and electrochemistry of the brain towards a theory that can explain—or explain away—the phenomena celebrated in folk psychology. There has been a surfeit of debate on the strategic question of which direction of travel is superior, "top-down" from mind to brain or "bottom-up" from brain to mind, but that is now largely behind us and well understood. A much more interesting clash concerns what to look for in the way of interlarded theory. It is here that manifestos about "computational" vie with each other, and it is this issue I will attempt to clarify.

Consider the extreme positions in their purest forms. First, there is what I shall call *High Church Computationalism*, or HCC, which maintains that between ordinary language folk psychology and brain science there will be at least one level of theory quite "close" to the high level of folk psychology that is both "cognitive" and "computational". The defining dogmas of HCC form a triad:

(1) *Thinking is information processing*. That is, the terms of folk psychology are to be spruced up by the theorist and recast more rigorously: "thinking" will be analysed into an amalgam of processes—"inference", "problem solving", "search" and so forth; "seeing" and "hearing" will be analysed in terms of "perceptual analysis" which itself will involve inference, hypothesis-testing strategies and the like.

(2) *Information processing is computation* (which is symbol-manipulation). The information-processing systems and operations will themselves be analysed in terms of processes of "computation", and since, as Jerry Fodor says, "no computation without representation", a medium of representation is posited, consisting of symbols belonging to a system which has a syntax (arbitrary rules) and formal rules of symbol-manipulation for deriving new symbolic complexes from old.

(3) *The semantics of these symbols connects thinking to the external world*. For instance, some brain thingamabob (brain state, brain system, complex property of brain tissue) will be the symbol for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and some other brain thingamabob will be the symbol for budget. Then we will be able to determine that another, composite brain thingamabob refers to the MIT budget, since the symbolic structures composable within the representational medium have interpretations that are a systematic function of the semantic interpretations of their elements. In other words, there is a language of thought, and many of the terms of this language (many of the symbols manipulated during computation) can be said to refer to things in the world such as Chicago, whales and the day after tomorrow.

At the other extreme from the High Church Computationalists are those who flatly deny all of these theses: there is no formal, rule-governed, computational level of description intervening between folk psychology and brain science.

Between folk psychology and brain science. Thinking is something going on in the brain all right, but it is not computation at all; thinking is something holistic and emergent—and organic and fuzzy and warm and cuddly and mysterious. I shall call this extreme version *Zen Holism*. (Richard Dawkins speaks of those who are "holistier than thou".)

In between these extremes are all manner of intermediate compromise positions, most of them still rather dimly envisaged at this inchoate stage of inquiry. It would be handy to have a geographical metaphor for organizing and describing this theory-space, and happily one is at hand, thanks to Jerry Fodor.

Several months ago, in a heated discussion at MIT about rival theories of language comprehension, Professor Fodor characterized the views of a well-known theoretician as "West Coast"—a weighty indictment in the corridors of MIT. When reminded that this maligned theoretician resided in Pennsylvania, Fodor was undaunted. He was equally ready, it turned out, to brand people at Brandeis or Sussex as West Coast. He explained that just as when you're at the North Pole, moving away from the Pole in any direction is moving south, so moving from MIT in any direction is moving West. MIT is the East Pole, and from a vantage point at the East Pole, the inhabitants of Chicago, Pennsylvania, Sussex and even Brandeis University a dozen miles away in Waltham are all distinctly Western in their appearance.

Since MIT, the East Pole, is the Vatican City of High Church Computationalism, and since the best known spokesmen of Zen Holism hold forth from various podes in the San Francisco Bay area, I propose the following idealized map of the present state of things: all positions about computational models of mental phenomena can be located in a logical space with the East Pole at the centre and the West Coast as its horizon. (I am adapting Fodor's discovery of the East Pole to my own purposes.) In between the extremes there are many positions that disagree sharply over many matters (they are, as one says, "diametrically opposed"), but can nevertheless all be seen to be more or less Western, depending on which denials or modifications of HCC they defend. As in any attempt at cartography, this is just one of many possible projections. It claims no essential rightness, but invites your consideration as a useful organizer.

These warring doctrines, High Church Computationalism and its many heresies, are not themselves theories; they are ideologies. They are ideologies about what the true theory of the mind will or must be like, when we eventually divine it. Various attempts to create genuine theories—various research programmes—seem to be committed to various ideologies arrayed in our space, but as we shall see, the band between research programme and ideology is rather loose. The fact that great progress is (or is not) being made on research programme might tell us next to nothing about the ultimate soundness of its inspiring ideology.

And vice versa: refutation of an ideology sometimes has little effect on the research done under its banner.

Not surprisingly, the philosophers who have been the most active formulators and guardians of the ideologies. Fodor, in *The Language of Thought* (1975) and *Representations* (1981), has for some time been the theologian in residence at the East Pole. Hubert Dreyfus and John Searle at Berkeley are the gurus of West Coast Zen Holism. Hartry Field (in *Event, Complex Property of Brain Tissue*) will be the symbol for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and some other brain thingamabob will be the symbol for budget. Then we will be able to determine that another, composite brain thingamabob refers to the MIT budget, since the symbolic structures composable within the representational medium have interpretations that are a systematic function of the semantic interpretations of their elements. In other words, there is a language of thought, and many of the terms of this language (many of the symbols manipulated during computation) can be said to refer to things in the world such as Chicago, whales and the day after tomorrow.

At the other extreme from the High Church Computationalists are those who flatly deny all of these theses: there is no formal, rule-governed, computational level of description intervening between folk psychology and brain science.

gy (1963) was a founding document of High Church Computationalism, but who, under the influence of J. J. Gibson, renounced the faith in *Cognition and Reality* (1975), and helped to turn lithica into something of a West Coast colony.

From one vantage-point, all work on Artificial Intelligence (AI) seems unproblematically committed to HCC. If your models are written in LISP and are actually designed to run on computers, how can you take yourself seriously as a theorist or modeller of mental processes without taking yourself to be presupposing the thesis—or at least playing the hunch—that mental processes are analogous to the constituent computer processes of your model at least to the extent to being formal, computational processes of symbol manipulation?

Many cognitivist theorists have been content to adopt just such an ideology. After all, what's wrong with it? This is the question that has thrown down the gauntlet to the ideological foes of HCC, who have been so concerned to demonstrate the shortcomings of HCC doctrines as *ideology* that they have seldom cared to ask whether the research programmes of the proponents of HCC are as deeply committed to its doctrines as they maintain. Thus a recurrent and powerful line of criticism of HCC points out that such computational models as have actually been proposed by workers in AI or cognitive psychology are ludicrously underdetermined by the available data, even when they are quite plausible, as they often are. This criticism usefully reveals how far the central claims of HCC are from being demonstrated, but otherwise it strikes only a glancing blow: for if there are deep methodological reasons to hope that a winning computational model will one day emerge, the prospect that early exploratory models will be drastically underdetermined by the data should be viewed as a tolerable (and entirely anticipated) phase of the research programme.

And Fodor has provided us with a candidate for a deep methodological reason for throwing in our lot with HCC: it's the only remotely explicit positive idea anyone has. Fodor's challenge ("What else?") has very effectively embarrassed the opposition for years, since Zen Holism itself is not a positive alternative, but only a brute denial. Saying that thinking is holistic and emergent only announces the flavour of your scepticism; it merely gestures in the direction of an alternative. Dreyfus and other West Coast philosophers have taken the extreme course: they have attempted to find *a priori* arguments showing that HCC couldn't possibly be true. But they have won few converts with their arguments, and the verdict of many onlookers is that the debate conducted in those terms is a standoff at best.

If there is a *a priori* gambit has been overdone, there is a more modest Western tactic that has seldom been adopted by philosophers, but has been quite influential in some AI circles: trying to explain not why HCC is impossible, but why, even if it is both possible (for all one can tell) and the only articulated possibility to date, it is so unlikely to be correct.

High Church Computationalism does seem to me (and to many others) to be highly implausible, for reasons that are hard to express but that hover around the charge that a computational symbol-manipulating brain seems profoundly unbiological. This unbiological suspicion should not be trusted, for one's intuitions about what is biological and what is not are (for most of us, surely) an undisciplined crew. What could seem more unbiological (from one intuitive vantage-point) than the clockwork mechanisms of DNA replication, for instance? So if this is to be more than just another way of saying No to HCC, without providing any real argument, we need to say something more explicit about why we think an HCC-style brain would not be Nature's Way.

Douglas Hofstadter has recently found a way of expressing this misgiving that strikes me as on the right track. HCC systems, designed as they are "through a 100% top-down approach", are too *efficient* in their utilization of machinery. As we work our way down through the nested black boxes, "functions calling subfunctions calling subfunctions", decomposing larger homunculi into committees of smaller, dumber homunculi, we provide for no waste motion, no non-functional or dysfunctional clutter, no featherbedding homunculi.

But that is not Nature's Way; designing systems or organizations with that sort of efficiency requires genuine foresight, a detailed anticipation of the problem spaces to be encountered, the tasks the system will be called upon to perform. Another way of putting this point is that such systems, by being designed all the way down, have too much intelligence implicated in their design at the lower levels. Nature's Way of providing flexibility and good design involves a different kind of efficiency, the sort of efficiency that can emerge opportunistically out of prodigious amounts of "wasteful" and locally uninterpretable activity—activity that isn't from the outset "for" anything, but plays some very modest role (or many roles on many different occasions) in some highly distributed process.

This is a theme to counterbalance the themes of HCC that have so dominated imagination. But is it just a theme? Until very recently, Fodor's challenge stood unanswered: no one had any explicit proposals for how such "bottom-up" systems could do any recognizable cognitive work. The only suggestions forthcoming from the philosophers (and neuroscientists as well) were metaphorical and mysterious. But now from out of the West something better is coming. Explicit proposals, and even working, testable models are emerging from a variety of workers clustered around the so-called *New Connectionism*.

The most compelling first impression of the New Connectionists (and the point of their name) is that they are looking closely at neural architecture and trying to model much closer to the brain than the mind. That is, if East Pole AI programs appear to be attempts to model the mind, New Connectionist AI programs appear to be attempts to model the brain. And some of the purer or more extreme approaches feature explicit commentary on the parallels between neurons or neuron assemblies and the functional units of their models. But it is a mistake, I think, to read the movement as "neurophysiology carried on by other means". Nor is the distinctive difference simply or mainly a matter of being much more bottom-up than top-down. For while brainish-looking bits and pieces and assemblies do often appear in these new models, what is more important is that at a more abstract level the systems and elements—whether or not they resemble any known brainware—are of recognizable biological types.

The most obvious and familiar abstract feature shared by most of these models is a high degree of parallel processing, either simulated or based on actual parallel hardware. "While the point has been brought home to everybody by now that the brain is a massively parallel processor, and that this is important to understanding how the mind's work is done by the brain, there is less interest among the New Connectionists in the question of just what kind of parallel processor the brain is than in what the powers of massively parallel processors in general are. Hence some of the parallel-processing models are almost wilfully "unrealistic" as models of brain organization. For instance, one of the guiding analogies of Hofstadter's "Jumbo architecture" is the constructing of molecules by enzymes floating freely within the cytoplasm of a cell. But Hofstadter doesn't think that the cognitive tasks the Jumbo architecture is designed to perform—the example exploited in the exposition and testing of the architecture is solving anagrams—are performed within the cell bodies of people's brain cells."

Another widely and diversely used New Connectionist idiom—"simulated annealing"—derives from statistical mechanics. Computational analogues of alternatively "warming" and "cooling" structures to get them to settle into the best combinations have proved to be powerful new methods in several different domains.

Although there is a lot of diversity and disagreement among the people who cluster around the Western-style New Connectionists, a few characteristics—familiar resemblances—are worth noting. In these models, typically, there is:

(1) "distributed" memory and processing, in which units play multiple, drastically equivocal roles; and in which disambiguation occurs only "globally". In short, some of these models are what you might call computational holograms. For instance, Pentti Kanerva's "distributed

one to bring it prop the ad his hat "it" any of "his" is not o and aside enu-criti-com-it the ham-what tent. and if is nited a his ther is n the unit- of is in osi-jub-it in e." of and phy cin syd rise vis-en, in an la-s." and bes lis-of ing vis-not he e is my om this tier. it it way een he ald-" nis-hao the of

1. 1452 10 15 16

recognition" memory has a strictly limited capacity for high-quality memory, but when it is overloaded, the effect is not to create a simple overflow, in which no new information can be input. Rather, the input of too much information leads to the partial degradation of information previously stored; the superimposition of the excess information smudges or obscures the information already in memory.

(2) No central control, but rather a partially anarchic system of rather competitive elements. See, eg, Feldman and Ballard's discussion of "winner take all" or WTA networks. (Many of these ideas can be seen to be new versions of much older ideas in AI - eg, Selfridge's PANDEMONIUM, and of course "perceptrons".)

(3) No complex message-passing between modules or subsystems. That is, for instance, no discursive messages "about the outside world": "The fundamental premise of connectionism", according to Feldman and Ballard, "is that individual neurons do not transmit large amounts of symbolic information. Instead they

compute by being *appropriately connected* to large numbers of similar units."

(4) A reliance on statistical properties of ensembles to achieve effects.

(5) The relatively mindless and inefficient making and unmaking of many partial pathways of solutions, until the system settles down after a while not on the (predesignated or pre-designatable) "right" solution, but only with whatever "solution" or "solutions" "feel right" to the system. This combines the idea of simulated annealing (or a close kin of it) with the idea that, in nature, not all "problems" have "solutions" and there is a difference between a process stopping and its being turned off.

The models being explored are still computational but the level at which the modelling is computational is much closer to neuroscience than to psychology. What is computed is not (for instance) an implication of some proposition about Chicago, or a formal description of a grammatical transformation, but (for instance) the new value of some threshold-

like parameter of some element which all by itself has no univocal external-world semantic role. At such a low level of description, the semantics of the symbolic medium of computation refer only (at most) to events, processes, states, "addresses" within the brain - within the computational system itself. In short, on this view the only formal, computational "language of thought" is rather like a machine language for a computer, and you can't say "it's raining in Chicago" in machine language; all you can express are imperatives about what to do to what contents of what address and the like.

How, then, do we ever get anything happening in such a system that is properly *about* Chicago? On these views there must indeed be higher levels of description at which we can attribute external-semantic properties to brain thingumabobs (this brain thingumabob refers to Chicago, and that one refers to MIT), but at such a level the interactions and relationships between elements will not be computational, but - and here we lapse back into metaphor and handwaving - statistical, emergent, holistic. Thus in this vision of things the low, computational level is importantly unlike a machine language, in that there is no supposition of a direct translation or implementation relation between the high-level phenomena which do have an external-world semantics and the low-level phenomena, which do not. If there were, then the usual methodological precept of computer science would be in order: ignore the hardware since the idiosyncrasies of its particular style of implementation add nothing to the phenomenon, provided the phenomenon is rigorously described at the higher level.

My favourite metaphor for this proposal is meteorology. Think of meteorology and its relation to physics. Clouds go scudding by, rain falls, snowflakes pile up in drifts, rainbows emerge; this is the language of folk meteorology. Modern-day folk meteorologists - that is, all of us - know perfectly well that somehow or other all those individual clouds and rainbows and snowflakes and gusts of wind are just the emergent saliences (saliences relative to our perceptual apparatus) of vast distributions of physical energy, water droplets and the like.

There is a gap between folk meteorology and physics, but not a very large and mysterious one. Moving back and forth between the two domains takes us on familiar paths. It is important to note that the meteorologists' instruments are barometers and hygrometers and thermometers, not cloudmeters, rainbownmeters and snowflakemeters. The regularities of which the science of meteorology is composed concern pressure, temperature and relative humidity, not the folk-meteorological categories.

There is not, today, any field of computational cloudology. Is this because meteorology is in its infancy, or is such an imagined science as out of place as astrology? Note that there are patterns, regularities, large-scale effects and, in particular, reactive effects between items in folk-meteorological categories and other things. For instance, many plants and animals are designed to discriminate folk meteorological categories, for one purpose or another. But we can grant all this without having to suppose that there is a formal system governing those patterns and regularities, or the reactions to them. Similarly - and this is the moral of the meteorological metaphor - it does not follow from the fact that the folk-psychological level of explanation is the "right" level for many purposes that there must be a computational theory at or near that level. The alternative to High Church Computationalism is that it is the clouds and rainbows in the brain that have intentionality - that refer to Chicago, and grandmother - but that the rigorous computational theory that must account for the passage and transformation of these clouds and rainbows will be at a lower level, where the only semantics is internal - and somewhat strained as semantics (in the same way the "semantics" of machine languages is a far cry from the semantics of natural languages).

But how are we to move beyond the metaphor and develop these new low-level hypotheses into explicit theory at the "higher", or more "central", cognitive level? The bits of theory that are becoming explicit in the New

Connectionist movement are relatively close to the "hardware" level of description, and the cognitive work they can do so far in often characterized in either relatively peripheral or relatively subordinate. For instance pattern-recognition appears (to many theorists) to be a relatively early or peripheral component in perception, and memory appears (to many theorists) to be a rather subordinate ("merely clerical" one might say) component in the higher intellectual processes of planning or problem-solving. To the ideologues of the West, however, these appearances have misled. All thinking, no matter how intellectual or central or (even) rule-governed, will turn out to make essential use of fundamentally perceptual operations such as versatile pattern-recognition; it is no accident that we often say "I see" when we come to understand. And, according to the Western view, the apportionment of responsibility and power between memory and intelligent processing will be unlike the underlying (and ineluctably influential) division of labour in von Neumann machines, in which the memory is inert, cold storage, and all the action happens in the central processing unit; a proper memory will do a great deal of the intelligent work itself.

So far as I know, no one has yet come up with a way of sorting out these competing hunches in a medium of expression that is uniform, clear and widely understood (even if not formal). What we need is a level of description that is to these bits of theory roughly as software talk is to hardware talk in conventional computer science. That is, it should abstract from as many low-level processing details as possible while remaining in the spirit of the new architectures.

Prospects for the development of this level of description are bright, but aside from a few landmark successes, such as David Marr's *Vision* (1982), the effort in this area is still so inchoate that any attempt at summary description would be misleadingly concrete.

This article is excerpted from a paper presented at the Sloan Foundation Conference on the Philosophical Foundations of Cognitive Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, May 17-20, 1984. The complete text will appear in *M. Brand and R. Harshman (eds): Problems in the Representation of Knowledge and Belief, University of Arizona Press.*

1. See, eg, "The Significance of Significance: The Case of Cognitive Psychology", in Solso Mitchell and Michael Rosen, (eds): *The Need for Interpretation*, 1983, pp.141-69.
2. Stephen Stich: *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Science*, 1983; Robert Cummins: *The Nature of Psychological Explanation*, 1983; John Haugeland: "The Nature and Plausibility of Cognitivism", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1978, and *Mind Design*, 1981; Margaret Boden: "What is Computational Psychology?" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1984.
3. See, eg, "Beyond Ballef" in Andrew Wardfield (Editor): *Thought and Object*, 1982; "Styles of Mental Representation", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1983.
4. "Physical Symbol Systems", in *Cognitive Science*, 1980, 4.
5. See, eg, *Rules and Representation*, 1980.
6. See, eg, his articles in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1978, 1980.
7. Hofstadter has suggested that Zadeh's fuzzy set theory is actually better seen as an attempt, entirely within the Eastern Orthodox, to achieve what Coast ends with East Pole means. I am inclined to agree; this is one of the fine points of interpretation in need of further work.
8. In "Artificial Intelligence: Subcognition as Computation" in Machup and Mansfield (eds): *The Study of Information: Interdisciplinary Meetings*, 1983, pp. 263-85. Hofstadter calls High Church Computationalism the Boolean Dream.
9. See, eg, Feldman and Ballard: "Connectionist Models and Their Properties", in *Cognitive Science*, 1982.
10. See, eg, D. Hillis: "The Connected Machine" (Computer Architecture for the New Wave), *AI Memo 646*, MIT, September 1981; Scott E. Fahlman, Geoffrey Hinton and Terrence J. Sejnowski: "Massively Parallel Architectures for ART, NETL, Thistle and Boltzmann Machines", in *Proc AAAI*, Washington, DC, 1983.
11. Douglas Hofstadter: "The Architecture of Jumbo", in *Proceedings of the Second International Machine Learning Workshop*, University of Illinois, 1983.
12. See S. Kirkpatrick, C.D. Gelatt, Jr and M.P. Vecchi: "Optimization by Simulated Annealing", *Science*, May 13, 1983; and Paul Smolensky: "Information Theory, A Mathematical Framework for Learning and Parallel Computation", in *Proc AAAI*, Acapulco 1985; Washington DC.

The asphalt jungle

Angela Carter

ANNE CAMPBELL
The Girls in the Gang: A report from New York City
277pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £14.95.
0 631 13374 7

The lives of the three women members of New York street gangs, the subject of Anne Campbell's piece of investigative sociology, are curiously anachronistic, as though there were a time warp in New York City and a sizeable segment of its population were living, not in Reaganite affluence, but the terrible, brief lives of the poor of medieval Paris or Victorian London. Sun-Africa, one of the women whose lives Ms Campbell has partially shared and whose tape-recorded voices she transcribes for us, seems, says Campbell, to "perceive life as a kind of jungle in which another gang, the police or a bullet are all likely to stop her in her path". This is Hobbesian talk, but Sun-Africa's perception appears to tally quite well with the recorded facts.

This is a book about one aspect of the schizophrenic geography of the United States, in which the First World co-exists cheek by jowl with the Third and the inhabitants of both worlds watch the same soap operas on television. The girls in the gangs, or, rather, the female auxiliaries of the boys' gangs - named with such baroque invention, the Dragon

All-rounders

Jonathan Burnham

LIZA CRIDFIELD DALBY
Gelsha
347pp. University of California Press. £19.95.
0 520 04742 7

This investigation into the world of the gelsha is a curious amalgam of personal memoir and ethnography. Liza Cridfield Dalby observed the *mizu shobai*, Japan's demi-monde of performers and courtesans, from the inside: she was adopted by a Kyoto gelsha-house, became a gelsha known as Ichigiku and seems to have been a great success. The gelsha world is a society within a society, and as such might be viewed - Dalby doesn't emphasize this - as microcosmic, with its hierarchic structure, and its stress on a disciplined training, on an immaculate exterior and on the necessary gap between outward expression and genuine feeling.

The *honne* / *tatemae* division which the Japanese take so much for granted. On the other hand it is unique: an all-female society in which the members address each other as "sister" and their leader as "mother", and a way of life which leads anarchically away from the institutions of marriage and family.

Dalby devotes a brief section of *Gelsha* to history, charting the profession's fluctuations in popularity, and correctly underlines the gelsha's progress from arbiter of fashion in the Edo period to curator of tradition in the present day. The bazy line between the gelsha's duties as performing artist and as upper-crust prostitute remains indistinct, although Dalby is at pains to establish the gelsha as principally an entertainer, proficient in at least one of the classical arts. The recherché nature of the profession has turned the gelsha into a modern form of minstrel, the obligatory status symbol to flourish at the company banquet. Girls who choose this profession tend to be, as Dalby points out, of an aggressively modern cast; and those older Japanese who like to revere the gelsha as the representative of a dying cultural tradition would be horrified if their daughter decided to become one.

The organization of Dalby's study is somewhat hectic, skipping between ethnography and reminiscence, and there are odd gaps: little mention of the literary tradition that helped to foster the image of the gelsha, and no exploration of the aesthetic implications of the particular mode of heightened artificiality which the gelsha presents. *Gelsha* is unlikely to be the scholarly study of the subject, but it remains an entertaining, first-hand account of a year as a gelsha, and its tone, although flavoured at times, is refreshingly straightforward and earthy. In true gelsha style.

Debs, the Turban Queens, the Emperor Ladies - all adore soap opera. The soaps take place in surroundings of extraordinary luxury: the Sandman Ladies, the Elegant Queens, the Devil's Rebels (Ladies), live in roach-ridden apartments on burned-out blacks. But the soaps are saying, see the rich have problems, too. Problems can't be solved by money. It is not the life style but the melodramatics of *Dallas* and *Dynasty* and *All My Children* with which Campbell's informants identify, for their own lives are conducted with similar passions more like those of grand opera than of soap opera. Passion is free and the girls are poor: criminality in these boroughs does not procure rich dividends. The steady source of income remains the welfare cheque - the price, as Gore Vidal once said, that the United States pays for keeping ethnic minorities out of the mainstream of economic life. Of Campbell's three waiters, two are Puerto Rican and one is Black but not Black American - Sun-Africa's family are emigrants from Panama.

Gangs have been a feature of New York life since the earliest days of the city; the territorial groupings, the sense of family ties imparted by gang membership, all these created, and still create, a sense of community in the featureless space of the new city, the new and unknown society. Gangs seem to be growing more and more psychologically important as most of New York that is not Manhattan grows daily to look more and more like the suburbs of Hell.

Violent death is the constant companion of Sun-Africa, Weeza and Connie. Sun-Africa has suffered the deaths of not one but two lovers (both shot while committing burglaries). Weeza lost her common-law husband, probably killed by a rival gang, during the course of Campbell's field work. Connie is forced to move house because of death threats to her family. They all fight in gang wars; sometimes beg and steal; discipline errant girls; give succour and advice, but the Women's Movement has had no appreciable effect on their contingent status. They join the gangs for love of a man, or because their brothers are members, or for fun, or for all three. The girl "dressed outlaw", with the flick-knife at her belt, is a mother and a lover, first and foremost. The gangs present no radical alternative life style for women. Nor for men.

"The gang is not a counter-culture but a microcosm of American society", concludes

Campbell. She quotes Bob Dylan, ironically: "To live outside the law you must be honest", and the gangs readily subscribe to the myth of the romantic outlaw, but they are hypocrites. For all those whom Campbell talks to, crime is something other people do; when we do it, we have no other choice and are absolved of responsibility. The gangs like to think of themselves as vigilantes, keeping their neighbourhoods safe; in fact, they commit most of their depredations right there on the block. The characteristic crimes of the alarmingly named Sex Boys and Girls (of which Weeza is a member) are to rob Saturday-night drunks and hit old ladies on the head before snatching their handbags. The Sandman, into which Connie has married, confine themselves to dealing in dope, which, in the circumstances, is behaving like boy scouts.

The Five Per Cent Nation, though, is something else, even if the New York Police Department define it as a gang. Five Per Centers are the enlightened ones, "the Muslims and the Muslims' sons". Sun-Africa, who took that name when she joined them, is a refugee both from the lower middle class and also from a promising career as a juvenile delinquent. Before she became Sun-Africa, she distinguished herself in an autonomous, exclusively female gang. Style and shop-lifting were their thing and they were known as the Puma Crew, after the brand of sneakers they liked to wear. Subsequently Sun-Africa donned the long robe of an "enrth", as the men, or "gods", of the Five Per Cent Nation call their women, and now lives in a kind of harem - the "gods" are polygamous, as befits good Muslims. Her family wanted her to go to college and they are startled and upset by her present way of life. But it is almost as if Sun-Africa, terrified by her experience of the freedom of the criminal, deliberately sought out for herself a life bound by the most stringent limitations.

Although the Five Per Cent Nation is notorious for the murders and robberies connected with it, and has recruited existing gangs into it, it has, unlike the Angels of the Night and the Shadows of Death, an ideology that makes sense of its members' experience. When Sun-Africa says that if it were not for the Nation she would probably be dead, it is impossible not to believe her. In an amoral world, any value system may seem better than none. Sun-Africa is sixteen.

Difficulties down town

Maureen Cain

JAMES MCCLURE
Cop World: Policing the streets of San Diego
341pp. Macmillan. £12.95.
0 333 30688 0

If reading of the shame of others - of the setting up of mele homosexuals by telephone or by waiting for them in cubicles, or the interruption of a prostitute and her client - is unappealing, or if one wants to think seriously about the problems of policing in the modern world, then one should avoid James McClure's *Cop World*, for it is not only distasteful but also dangerous in the images it presents. But the book masquerades as serious ethnography. The author makes truth claims: he was there; he saw it; these were real interviews. McClure does not quantify the observations or set the evidence in context; there is no way in which the reader can decide how typical any of his assertions are. In fact, I am ready to believe his account of the attitudes and activities of the San Diego police force. The more serious problem is that McClure presents the values and beliefs of these reformed police officers as inevitable, even as good: Policing for the male police officers in San Diego is fun, and McClure sets out to show us why that is so.

The introduction of COP (community-oriented policing) involved a change of dress (the abandonment of helmets, boots, black gloves, ski-glasses, etc), an encouragement of "ride alongs" (citizen observer/passengers), an improvement in management (freebies were no longer allowed, all encounters with citizens had to be recorded, an internal quality control unit was set up), and the effective promulgation by management of the ideology that

"there's no way in hell we're going to control these people unless they're on our side". None the less, street people, demonstrators, Mexican youth are still the Other. In a dozen patrols described here there are two incidents of "hog-tying", of men being trussed up, screaming, feet and hands knotted in the small of the back.

The Chief openly admits his reluctance to fulfil Federal quotas (20 per cent women, 15 per cent Chicano, 10 per cent black). But here it is hard to disentangle the author's view from those of the men, one of whom, in talking about policewomen, says "I bet I could whip any one of them in a fist fight and I'm 47 years old". But, says the author, "it would be difficult to accuse him of being simply prejudiced about female officers, as his delightfully funny and vivacious wife is a former policewoman". Even more horrendous is the brief concluding discussion of cross-cultural differences. McClure admires the docility the sight of a gun produces, and the fact that "In San Diego if he had any difficulty in making the arrest he would simply use the 'choke hold', rendering the subject instantly unconscious".

But there were some good guys, and McClure gives them their due. The ambivalence of the black man "Bill McClure", for whom policing created a "hole in his soul", is well caught, as is the joy in the barrio of "Sgt. Juretz", and Sgt. "Jim Bradford's" conduct of a negotiated truce between rival groups of almost warring youths. Perhaps the only really hopeful story, though, is of how closely the sex-crimes division works with local rape lawyers and centres, and of how seriously they take the problems of the victim. But this resulted from organized political pressure by groups of women, not from any internal "reform".

Score-bored

Michael Tanner

PICKLES
Queens
289pp. Quartet. £8.95.
0 7043 2439 3

The title of this fascinating and often brilliant book is a bit misleading. It is about male metropolitan homosexuals, especially those who cruise compulsively and go to Heaven, where as "queen" is normally applied to middle-aged camp gays, or certain stereotypes, such as opera queens, size queens, and drag queens. All these naturally make their appearance in Pickles's authoritative work, but to call a rent-boy a queen is stretching it. It's not surprising, though, that as a title the word proved irresistible.

The book begins with thumbnail sketches of twelve kinds of queen; far from exhaustive, but unfailingly accurate. Thus the Straight Queen: "Although he sleeps with his wife and loves his children, he is tormented by the memory of a wicked fling in Cambridge with a lay-clerk... He likes Waugh and High Church paraphernalia, especially the vestments. The Passion interests him most, and purple is his favourite colour... Shabbier queens like film-stars, but this chap's pin-up is the Virgin Mary." The tone of the book is itself clearly queenly, in some ways it is reminiscent of early Angus Wilson, with its combination of shrill-eyed comedy and Port Royal-like moralism. Pickles evidently disapproves strongly of almost everyone he writes about, and the portrayal of the lives of his queens, once they get moving in a series of playlets, is profoundly depressing. The obsessional interest in "scoring", which goes with a lack of interest in any of the qualities of whom one scores with, apart from the physical (and a highly selective interest even in those); the incessant putting-down of other queens, with no hint of camaraderie in the front line; the tendency to feminize many aspects of a social group for whom women essentially don't exist, which involves giving one's fellow queens down-market women's names; the lunatic interest in *exactly* how one looks, especially how old - all this contributes to a nightmare, and one which recurs in most queens' lives every twenty-four hours.

Occasionally Pickles seems to be too familiar with a world which once intrigued him, so that its ruthless elimination of almost everything that makes people interesting has come merely to disgust him. As in Martin Amis's *Money*, which paints a similarly bleak picture of a contemporary lifestyle (the vile word is for once the *mot juste*), it is only by dint of skillfully, if not wholly plausibly, diversifying the dialect of this tribe that Pickles is able to sustain interest in them.

His book has also a slender but encouraging narrative thread: Ben's diary. Ben is of the queens' world, arty and unemployed, but with aspirations to a longer-lasting and deeper relationship than it is likely to provide, and he is fortunate enough to find one. What is more, the course of the relationship is so deftly sketched that it becomes a moving counterpoint to the strident main theme of the book, and in the end reaches a tenuous but triumphant climax, so that the "Bliss" which is the final word of *Queens* actually designates Ben's state of mind plausibly, as well as being a tired camp exclamation, and a self-conscious Joycean echo. It is preceded by a row on Hungerford Bridge which captures perfectly the idiotic way in which people move to an understanding of one another. And it is contrasted with two really ancient queens (Pickles's characters are as addicted to "reality" as everyone who wants to keep reality at a distance is nowadays) lamenting the state of trivialous misery in which nearly all the characters we have encountered going through their ritual paces spend their lives.

Both the blurb and the preface note imply that queens add to the colour and glamour of the contemporary scene, but I don't think Pickles believes that; certainly he gives no evidence of its being true. But the gusto of his dialect, while not exhilarating, compels attention to this particular hedonists' hell, and makes the book one of the liveliest pieces of contemporary fictional sociology I have come across.

Sparsely populated

Simon Rae

WILLIAM LOGAN
Difficulty
64pp. Edinburgh: Salamander Press. £3.95.
0907540430

ANDREW HARVEY
No Diamonds, No Hat, No Honey
72pp. Cape. £4.
0 224 02968 1

PAUL HYLAND
The Stubborn Forest
95pp. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe. £3.95.
0906427592

William Logan's poetry is cerebral, abstract and elusive. Its tone is fastidious, at times clinical, and its prevailing mood is sombre. The first poem in *Difficulty*, "Clare and Silence", is loosely structured on the well-known "Journey out of Essex", and uses Clare as a foil for ideas on the constrictions inherent in language and the possibility of an escape

where the language no longer incinerates him in paper, where words are only the wood, the church bell ringing across cut fields

which seems to hint at some epiphany in which silence – wordlessness – becomes the truest articulation of experience. The fact that Clare was too exhausted to have had much time for such visionary leaps beyond language on his dreadful journey is neither here nor there, though Logan's final "Clare, your madness / confirms the losses that never were", while pointing up whole areas of misery deriving from Clare's delusions, does challenge the response that most of his losses – the loss of the Helpston environment through enclosure, the loss of his publisher and his public, etc – were real enough. Like Auden's "Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry", it is a rhetorical flourish that tells about half the truth.

Landscape features importantly in Logan's poetry, though without Clare's particularity and obsessive sense of place. Logan, an American, falls into what might be called the *Naturalistic* tradition – boundlessly wide-ranging, rootless, detached: "Heaving up the slow encumbering shore, / Atlantic waterspouts retain a light / beneath the skin. / Volcanoes impose their immediate weather" ("Crows and DNA"). There is obviously some affinity with Elizabeth Bishop in this aspect of his work, and other poems point to her influence – "Cartography", "From a Far Cry, a Return to the City", echoing Bishop's "From the Country to the City", and "Florida", subtitled "a postcard", possibly in deference to the poem on the same subject in *North & South*. "News of the Moon" actually opens with the same image – desk-lamp as moon – as Bishop's "12 o'clock News".

But this should not be overstressed. Logan has not based either the sound or the shape of his poetry on Bishop's. He lacks – or hasn't been tempted to cultivate – what David Kalstone called Bishop's "relentless unflagging specificity"; nor is there any hint of that engaging, quirky and confiding speaking voice that makes Bishop so distinctive. Logan in fact has developed a rather chilling and impersonal poetry with scant tolerance for the human. In comparison with his first book, *Sad-faced Men* (1982), *Difficulty* is sparsely populated. People tend to make fleeting appearances before giving way to the inanimate again; psychological, even physical, states, are seen in terms of the natural world. "Your sickness exchanges / the sky for a rotting onion, / shedding rings upon the bruised air / until a last scorched light steadies / the horizon and stars burn in." In "Jealousy", "A silent caller knows the number of our telephone, / and I invent for you a book of lovers, / each with his appointment and bailing speech", but at the end of the poem the hole in the heart is represented by "the hole in the shattered window / an emptiness the shape of Australia". The little poem itself, a lengthy and complex "evocation of a painful love affair", as the book cover puts it, represents Logan at his most ambitious, but also at his most obscure and mannered: "How take a root from the radical of passion? / These houseplant days, a simple graft will fail / the mandate of its kind." After that (it is as much a relief as a surprise to come upon "The Shootist", a Wil-

Inmates of the household

Bernard O'Donoghue

PETER FORBES
Abdabbling the Dark
59pp. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets. £4.50.

JOHN MOLE
In and Out of the Apple
60pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.95.

PATRICK HARE
Aeroplanes in Childhood
53pp. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets. £4.50.

Recent poetry has seen a never-ending production line of family poems; Peter Forbes brings a cheering breath of fresh air into this domestic milieu, restoring to poetry a measure of positivist objectivity. Forbes, who did a Chemistry degree, sets out his purpose in the book's epigraph, taken from the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*:

If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.

The poem "Naming and Knowing" here best expresses the attempt to reconcile the "incurably plural" nature of the world with the scientific instinct towards "a deeper knowledge of less and less": Liam Hudson's convergent and divergent imaginations. A good example of the process in action is "Magnesium" from "The Elements in their Humours":

The ribbon flares like a hot silver flower.
A white hole punched in the core of space;
Actinic rays give a flash-bulb glare,
Leaving pale white fumes and your
burned-out stare.

"Actinic" (referring to sunshine's property of causing chemical change, as in photography) has great metaphorical resonance, but Forbes typically does not labour it. All the poems in the book's third section (called, from a line in the last poem, "Butterfly, shuttlecock, pulley and string") use scientific knowledge like this. It is a two-way process: science is a source of metaphor, serving literature, but it is often suggested that science itself is inert until it is humanized. "In Corpore Sano" describes morning exercises which make the body a well-tuned engine; but what is to be effected with it? "Surely there are tasks, employment for these fingers? / I draw up my knees and sit and stare."

This is not Forbes's only mood or technique. The two earlier sections contain highly evocative personal poems, of which the best, "Poem for Ian", describes with entirely unselfish sensitivity a hole-in-the-heart operation performed on his baby son. This book has a remarkably wide range. It is not without imperfections: sometimes the metres seem too insistent to their regularity and turn into a kind of doggerel; and Forbes is too fond of poetic formality: for example "Experiments with an Air-pump" seems to me an excellent subject, treated as ever with restrained amusement, that is rather spoiled by being cast as a

half-sestina. But Forbes's is an exciting and entertaining first volume, and the novelty of its sensibility carries the promise of a notable poet.

In *and Out of the Apple* displays John Mole's familiar formal accomplishment and contains some fine poems, but it lacks (as his previous volumes tended to) coherence of purpose. The shorter second section, "Penny Toys", has no pretensions to offering anything more than jingles (indeed the lack of pretension in Mole, while it is extremely likeable, is also rather disabling). The first section has thirty short poems under the unpromisingly modest epigraph from Conrad: "These, too, are things human, already distant in their appeal." The childhood poems which this introduces are often evocative, and one of them, "The Birthday", is outstanding of its kind. The child on his fifth birthday has unwittingly said something that wounds his parents and sits miserably in his pedal-car, having learnt

that truth –
Casting his shadow, neither cruel nor kind –
Encroaches on his parents like a blind
Dwarf slowly upwards to obscure them both.

But this major success (anthologists please note) only comes when Mole momentarily overcomes his self-consciousness and embarrassment. Anxiety to avoid portentousness or pomposity causes his bare, parodic expression often to descend to the flip. There is a casual echo of "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow", as well as "never, never, never, never" and a light-hearted look at Hamlet and the grove-diggers: too much passing Shakespeare for one short volume. This fragmentary allusiveness is presented sometimes as a statement of the difficulty of expression (in "Listening" and "Nobody's Last Words"), but it is precisely because Mole gives the impression of being fundamentally serious – admirably so – that its playfulness doesn't suit him. A good programme for Mole's next volume might be to abandon his traditional diversions into jizz and children's poetry, and to sustain the seriousness represented by the sparsely satiric "The President's Fountain" and the haunting "The Birthday".

Patrick Hare takes paintings as the stimuli for a number of his best poems, those grouped at the end of *Aeroplanes in Childhood*. The subject of most of the book is memories of family and childhood, and this overworked theme is not often treated here with enough force or originality. The poems are best when they move beyond personal memory to a longer historical memory, when they almost invariably (and fruitfully) collaborate with painterly attentiveness, as in "The soldiers' de-fused surprise" in the wall-paintings of the impressive "Domesday". The most interesting angle of approach to the personal past here is the way the process or reaching it is shown to be painful, in violent imagery, involving blood in a number of poems. And the scrupulous painter's eye confers on the writing its clarity and freedom from over-elaboration (which sometimes descends to flatness, as in "A Book").

The Mountain Hare

A white mountain hare
sits quietly on a stool
and watches the curatorial evening
fall through a bottle of wine.

Stuffed in 1926, you know,
it has nothing left to fear,
has nothing to do but embody the silence
and share the light from the river with the walls;

It tends to be like that in this Museum,
and since such evenings are hardly other than real
the hare has decreed that henceforth they'll be known,
for simplicity, as December Afternoon.

Everything here, says the mountain hare,
resolves itself into aspects of collection:
while careless tides ascend the nearby aitches
some sky drops in, to take a look at our bones.

PETER DIDSBURY

157 TLS December 14 1984 FICTION

The intelligence game

T. J. Binyon

LEN DEIGHTON
Mexico Set
31pp. Hutchinson. £3.95.
0915861100

Mexico Set is the second volume of a projected trilogy: at the end of the first, *Berlin Game*, published last year, the hero Bernard Samson discovers that his wife Fiona is his Delilah: while working with him in a Whitehall intelligence department, she has been a high-ranking mole, a KGB colonel no less. Exposed, she leaves in a hurry for East Germany, failing in a last-minute attempt to take her (or his) two children with her.

The second volume opens – unsurprisingly – in Mexico City, whither Samson and his boss Dicky Cruyer have come to investigate the sighting of a KGB major, last seen interrogating Samson in Berlin. As before, Deighton projects the view of an intelligence service whose members (with the exception of Samson) are more involved in the power struggle within the system than the one outside. Cruyer has "taken a PhD in office politics"; he might be "a little slow on languages and fieldwork,

but in the game of office politics he was seeded number one." The slipshod, meaningless nature of the second image (players are seeded at Wimbledon, not in tennis) reflects the generally tired and flaccid narrative tone of the opening episodes, with local colour as thick as guacamole.

Gradually things improve. When Samson's sister-in-law tells him not to "start all that working-class-boy-makes-good stuff", she's mocking an obsession of Deighton's earlier books; and once the intrigue reaches Berlin, the story is up and running with all the old verve and energy. Using treachery to split the Samson family was a stroke of genius, for it enables Deighton to see the conflict between two intelligence services as one between separated man and wife, heightened by their intimate knowledge of one another, and sharpened by their struggle for the children. At the same time there's something inescapably comic and implausible about the transformation of the rich and beautiful, Sloane Rangerish Fiona (née Kimber-Hutchinson) into a Rosa Klebb lookalike. It will be interesting to see whether Deighton's got anything up his sleeve to counter this in the third part of the trilogy, presumably to be entitled *London March*.

Desert island deaths

Toby Fitton

FRED UHLMAN
Beneath the Lightning and the Moon
Mpp. Dockworth. £7.95.
0756 19365

No novel by the author of *Reunion* may be ignored, even when it is as apparently slight as this volume, in which some seventeen of the 107 pages are blank. The brevity of *Beneath the Lightning and the Moon* is its undoing, as the author fails to allow himself sufficient space to investigate all the ramifications – particularly the psychological aspects – of his simple plot, in the detail they deserve.

Four very varied English victims of an air crash are stranded on a desert island in the Pacific, and await rescue initially with sangfroid but soon with little inner conviction of safety. They include a London cultural personage of implausibly varied attainment – museum official, Etruscan archaeologist, Fellow of All Souls and Companion of Honour – whose recent appearance on "Desert Island Discs" has all too soon come home to roost. There is a pretty teenager with enough simple nursery faith to keep her fairly resilient in spirit, and a

thrusting tycoon whose fragile financial empire will collapse like a card house in his absence. The quartet is made up by a Borstal-boy brute, isolated, contemptuous and uncooperative, who provides a menacing presence to the cultured metropolitan sophistication of his companions, but is eventually shown to be responsible when himself treated with the brutality he knows so well. Until the end this ill-assorted group subsists on technicolor fish, primitively caught and cooked, as hopes of rescue gradually evaporate.

The roles are very obviously defined: God and Mammon, culture and anarchy, beauty and the beast, in various combinations. Their interplay as morale crumbles and nature shows herself red in tooth and claw makes up the bulk of the story. As one would expect from Mr Uhlman, this is all handled with subtlety, and the grim conclusion is well managed as three of the four characters die off after months of tension, hallucination, scurvy, and disintegration. The survivor is the girl – Mr Uhlman could not have found it in his heart to kill her off too – and for this we must be grateful, but it was surely far too easy to dismiss her, after such horrifying experiences, with an all too convenient general amnesia and an irrelevant happy-ever-after ending.

Wheeling and dealing

Brian McCabe

JOHN BURROWES
Jamessie's People: A Gorbals story
271pp. Edinburgh: Mainstream. £9.95.
0906391717

Like Johnnie Stark, the Razor King of No Mean City, the famous novel of pre-war Glasgow life, the hero of *Jamessie's People* is another legend in his own lifetime. "Hard man" of the pre-war Gorbals, Jamessie displays all the traits we have come to recognize in the archetype: he is fearless, vicious and intent on acts of territorial violence which will maintain his reputation; and his prowess. He also contains the classic flaw of the hard man – a soft centre – and is murdered on the way to buy a present for one of his illegitimate children when he should really have been at home dropping his razors.

Dismissing the "brown-shawed housewife" who about their protestations from the addressees as the men carve each other up, Jamessie is also a hit with the women. She had suffered but never complained, on the nights when he had stayed away from home. She knew he was lying with other women. That was Jamessie, her Jamessie, and his ways – virile and dominant and she would have him no other way.

Jamessie's death occurs at the beginning of the novel but in an odd way he remains the

central character, since Burrowes goes on to trace the lives of those who inherit his notoriety: his widow, his daughter, his brother Sammy and, of course, his murderer.

It is Sammy's story – his progress from small-time black-market dealer to "legit" businessman – which yields the most insight into the world of the Gorbals. His progress involves illegal practices such as the making and marketing of boot-leg whisky during the war, and the use of a "man of straw", or decoy landlord, to rent out tenement properties and avoid maintaining them. Each stage in his wheeling and dealing rises to respectability is charted with a keen eye for historical accuracy.

At times this desire to be thorough undercuts the novel's essential readability, however. A character can't have a smoke without the author telling us that it was a Woodbine; "Five auburn tresses" is used to describe a blonde; and a slim green packet which was decorated with the yellow flower of the honeysuckle. The characters also suffer from their historical accuracy, although one senses that they are based on real individuals (the jacket blurb calls the book a "novelization") and are plausible enough in their dress and manner, when Burrowes attempts to go deeper and examine their motives and desires they become more approximations to real people. In this and many other respects *Jamessie's People*, a first novel, is clearly the work of a journalist, and will appeal most to readers who like a slice of fact with their fiction.

The state of peonage

John Melmoth

B. TRAVEN
The Rebellion of the Hanged
248pp. Allison and Busby £7.95 | paperback, £2.95.
0850314445

It has only recently become clear that, in spite of his hostility to a cult of personality, B. Traven's life was as eventful as his novels. Born Traven Torsen in Chicago about 1891, he ran away to sea at the age of ten. Between 1913 and 1919 he moved in German revolutionary circles and briefly exercised political power in the Bavarian Socialist Republic of 1918-1919. He was sentenced to death but managed to escape, wandered the world as a stateless person and worked as a "Wobly" for the International Workers of the World in the United States and Mexico before jumping ship from a tramp Norwegian freighter and taking up residence in Tamaulipas.

Mexico and the conditions of peonage provided him with the material for a space of revolutionary novels and short stories. His utopian but unsentimental anarchism (often likened to Thoreau's) is a contribution to proletarian literature entirely different in kind from the glum Stalinist realism of his Eastern European contemporaries. It is not surprising that, with the exception of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, his books have been more admired by German and Spanish speakers than by his fellow Americans. He died in 1969.

The six "jungle novels" written during the 1920s and 1930s – *Government*, *The Carreta*, *March to the Monteria*, *Trozas*, *The Rebellion of the Hanged* and *The General from the Jungle* – chronicle the events leading up to the 1911 Mexican revolution. This was an event made inevitable by the enslavement of the peons who were systematically cheated, taxed and butchered by extensive and entirely corrupt military and civil hierarchies of *federates* and *jefe*

politicos. The reign of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911) was a grotesque contrast of good public relations abroad (an image of industrial and technological expansionism) and a murderous cynicism in matters of domestic government. It is estimated that during these years one half of the population of rural Mexico was snared by a vicious debt slavery. Thousands of others languished in an archipelago of prisons from Vera Cruz to Yucatan, Talsen and Jelisco.

The Rebellion of the Hanged takes place in one of the infamous *monterias* or lumber camps, a Flanders of mud and suffering in which indentured peons cut impossible amounts of timber in conditions of absolute deprivation. They are brutally punished for the least transgression and are hanged from the trees at night when beatings no longer have any effect. The novel focuses on the representative torments of Candido: his wife dies of peritonitis when the doctor refuses to operate without poor payment, one son drowns because of a foreman's indifference, his sister is attacked, he and his remaining son are physically mutilated. Throughout Mexico similar events are accreting to an enormous total of misery. Eventually, beaten into a fixity of revolutionary purpose, the peasants will have no more of it and break into open rebellion. Selflessly, co-operatively and unflinchingly they carve up their tormentors and march on the capital.

That Traven wrote with verve and fluency, that his accounts of peon life and of the jungle are mesmerizing: is almost beside the point. Everything that he wrote was subordinated to a political purpose, to making it impossible for the reader to evade historical responsibility. The Indians endured such conditions because Europe demanded cheap furniture, because bankers and industrialists required mahogany writing desks. In *Government*, Traven maintains, "You cannot have cheap mahogany and at the same time save all those innocent victims who perish by the thousand in the jungle to get it for you."

AKHENATEN
THE HERETIC KING



Donald B. Redford

Akhenaten

The Heretic King
Donald B. Redford

A striking portrait of Akhenaten, monotheistic worshipper of the sun and best-known Egyptian king next to Tutankhamen. Redford, the Director of the Akhenaten Temple Project, draws on new evidence from his own excavations to describe the kingly heretic of Imperial Egypt. \$36.00 (U.S.)

Order from your local bookseller or from

Princeton University Press
15A Epsom Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3JT

one to
bring
it prop
id his
hat "it
my of
his is
not
o and
on as
aside
mua-
criti-
com-
t the
tam-
what
tent,
and
lf is
ruled
his
her
is n
the
Int-
of
s in
ast-
uh-
in s-
of
nd
4y
an
yd
lse
/a-
is-
n,
in
n-
ad
es
s-
of
18
s-
ot
he
is
ny
im
hs
ar.
he
It
ay
en
he
ld-
I
is-
an
he
of
19

John Burrowes

